



THE INDEPENDENT

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WEATHER: Warm and sunny

(IR45P) 40p

IN THE TABLOID

MEDIA+

PLUS: media and marketing appointments

DEBORAH ROSS INTERVIEW

PAGE 17

RAVANELLI DENIED



Gated: Sunny Bay, the Grand National favourite, waiting in a loose box at Haydock for the running of the race delayed by a bomb scare to 5pm today

Photograph: Empics

'Our strategy is minimum threat to life but maximum publicity and disruption'

— Republican sources yesterday on the new IRA campaign

David McKittrick, Anthony Bevis and Richard Edmundson

The postponement of the Grand National was part of a new IRA campaign of disruption and sabotage aimed at causing widespread disturbance without loss of life, according to Republican sources in Belfast.

One senior republican source told *The Independent* last night: "This is a lower-level military campaign aimed at disruption and sabotage more than the spectacular stuff. It is affecting tens of thousands of people, so it takes on a British national character."

"It is a strategy with a minimum threat to the lives of the civilian population and a maximum amount of publicity coverage and disruption to the British economy."

The source spoke after it was announced that the 150th Grand National will be staged late this afternoon amid unprecedented security for a major sporting event.

After the search for bombs was completed, the course was re-opened yesterday afternoon, ending almost 24 hours of waiting for the thousands of people evacuated by the alert on Saturday who had been forced to leave their cars behind.

Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, reacted to the Aintree affair by smashing the all-party agreement on "terrorist incidents" — outlined in a memorandum sponsored by his own department which says that when comment is "unavoidable", politicians should restrict themselves to non-political statements.

But Mr Howard issued a statement yesterday morning, on Conservative Party newspaper, saying Labour was not to be trusted on terrorism because, in the wake of Aintree, Jack Straw, the shadow Home Secretary, had contradicted Marjorie Mowlam, the party's Northern Ireland spokeswoman over the time span for allowing Sinn Féin into talks.

Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor, told BBC radio: "I think that all decent people will regret the fact that ... when there should be an all-party consensus to fight terrorism, Michael Howard has degenerated into making personalised and inaccurate comments about the Labour Party."

The authentication of IRA responsibility for Aintree, coupled with the explanation of their motivation and the extent of their ambitions, confirms that the authorities all over Britain will now be compelled to review security at sporting events and other gatherings.

Republican sources say they expect the next British government to put out private "feelers" towards the IRA and Sinn Féin within weeks of its election.

Marooned in misery, page 4
David McKittrick, page 19
Sport section, pages 4 and 5

Fast-growing economy but worse-off people

EXCLUSIVE

Diane Coyle and Anthony Bevis

Britain has become significantly worse off since the last election. And economic well-being has declined by more than a fifth in all since 1980, once official growth figures take account of factors such as pollution and crime.

The results of an authoritative new study due to be published later this week shed light on why the apparently thriving economy has not boosted the Conservatives' standing in the opinion polls. Contrary to John Major's claims, there is no economic basis for a sense of well-being.

The suggestion that Britain has not had it so bad contrasted with the never-had-it-so-good message being promoted by the Prime Minister — echoing the famous line of Harold Macmillan in the 1959 election.

Twenty years on, in 1979, Mr Major told BBC television's *Breakfast with Frost* yesterday, the key issue was whether Britain was a "basket case, the sick man of Europe".

He added: "Well, the sick man of Europe in 1979 is now

'The sick man of Europe in 1979 is the role model of Europe economically in 1997'

John Major yesterday

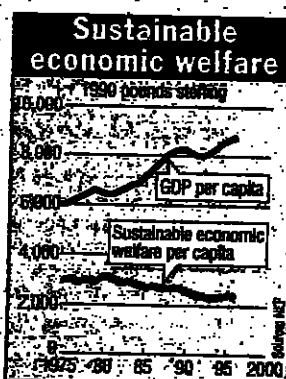
the role model of Europe economically in 1997." But this week's new figures tell a different story. They mark the first update of the indicator in five years by the University of Surrey for the New Economics Foundation, an independent economics think-tank, and Friends of the Earth. It adjusts national income for a variety of factors that affect economic well-being but are not included in the conventional measure, Gross Domestic Product.

The index adds the value of unpaid work in the home to GDP. But it subtracts costs arising from income inequality, due to increased crime and social tensions, from pollution

and the depletion of resources like North Sea Oil, and from so-called "defensive expenditures" such as spending on security as a result of fear of crime.

The calculations show that the per capita index of sustainable economic welfare increased, although at a slightly lower rate than GDP, until the late 1970s. But whereas GDP has increased by nearly 50 per cent since 1980, the sustainable welfare index has fallen by more than 20 per cent.

The value of work within the household has increased substantially during the past 18 years. But its boost to the value of the economy has been more than offset by big deduc-



'Britain's economic well-being has declined by more than a fifth in all since 1980'

New Economics Foundation report

behind the index of sustainable economic welfare. However, the official approach is to provide alternative information in "satellites" — such as the environmental accounts published for the first time last year — rather than publishing a single indicator.

The New Economics Foundation's forthcoming paper, detailing the updated index, says: "There is now an utter divorce between economists and what they measure, and the real day-to-day factors that make for the quality of life of British citizens."

Mr Doyle said: "Alternative indicators inevitably make particular value judgements but they cover all of the right ideas."

Mr Major said yesterday: "Many people simply don't remember how disastrous socialism has always proved in government."

"We've always had unemployment go up, we've always ended up bankrupt, it's always been a disaster."

"This country is incomparably better off in the beginning of 1997 than it was when I was re-elected in 1992, and we have a platform for prosperity for the future unmatched, literally, for generations."

call to politicians of every party." The index, derived from official statistics, is widely used by economists and researchers as the only reliable published alternative to the standard official figures.

Leo Doyle, an economist at City of London investment bank Kleinwort Benson, said: "I am pretty sceptical of GDP as a guide to economic welfare. Economists tend to look too much at the size of the cake, not how it is carved up or the quality of the ingredients."

Government statisticians are also sympathetic to the need for a better measure of economic well-being than GDP, and broadly accept the methodology

tions for sharply increased income inequality, for long-term environmental damage and running down natural resources, and for costs of commuting and private spending on health as a result of pollution.

Charles Secret, director of Friends of the Earth, said: "John Major and Tony Blair are still competing over who will achieve the fastest growth. When will they start competing over who will improve our quality of life?"

Tim Jackson, who headed the research team at the University of Surrey's Centre for Environmental Strategy, said: "The updated index is an urgent wake-up

Martin Bell takes up cudgels against Hamilton in sleaze war

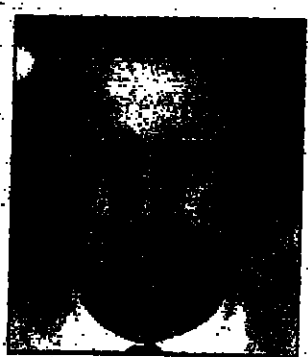
Anthony Bevis Political Editor

Martin Bell, the BBC's renowned war correspondent and senior reporter, is to stand as the anti-sleaze candidate against Neil Hamilton, the beleaguered Tory MP in the Cheshire constituency of Tatton.

The prize-winning journalist, who was injured by flying shrapnel in 1992 while covering the Bosnian war, put himself forward after the Labour candidate, Jon Kelly, had suggested that he would stand aside in favour of a respected non-party outsider to challenge Mr Hamilton, the MP at the heart of the cash-for-questions affair.

The Liberal Democrat candidate, Roger Barlow, quickly followed suit, and yesterday, Mr Bell attended separate meetings with both parties in the constituency. A senior Labour source said last night that both local parties had been "very impressed" by Mr Bell, who will be holding a press conference to formally announce his candidature in London today.

According to the source, the prospects of him standing emerged a few days ago when he met a mutual friend of Alastair Campbell, press officer to the Labour leader Tony Blair. His challenge adds to the already-severe pressure on Mr Hamilton to stand down, or to



Bell: Will stand for Tatton

get his local Conservative association to dump him, pending the verdict of the parliamentary inquiry into the cash-for-questions allegations that have been

levelled against him. If Mr Hamilton steps down, then there will be no reason for Mr Bell to stand, and Labour and the Liberal Democrats will return to the election fray — to fight the replacement candidate.

However, if it is left to Mr Hamilton and he is challenged by Mr Bell, there is widespread agreement within the constituency, and in the polls, that an independent candidate might well be able to wipe out the Tory's seemingly unassailable majority. The national majority in the re-drawn constituency is 22,000 requiring a by-election style swing of almost 22 per cent to beat Mr Hamilton.

Tatton Tories gather tomorrow night for a meeting which would have been a formality — the adoption of Mr Hamilton as their candidate.

The BBC said last night that Mr Bell had been placed on unpaid leave for the duration of the election campaign and that BBC rules prevented him from returning to work in current affairs and his position would be reviewed after the election.

A spokeswoman said: "Martin Bell is entitled to exercise his democratic right to stand for parliament. As soon as we were informed of his decision he was told that his work would cease and that he would be on unpaid leave for the duration of the campaign."

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news

significant shorts

Schoolboys injured by concrete thrown at coach

A 14-year-old schoolboy was in intensive care last night in Liège, Belgium after being hit by an 11lb lump of concrete thrown at a coach taking a school party to a skiing trip in Austria.

Ross Jelf, of West Bromwich, suffered a fractured skull. His friend Richard Comery, 14, from Birmingham was hit on the leg as they travelled on the motorway between Liège and Brussels on Saturday. Richard shrugged off his injury yesterday to take part in a Duke of Edinburgh walk. The two boys were among a party from Dartmouth High School.

Richard's father, Tony Comery, 46, said yesterday: "Some yobboes lobbed a concrete brick and it went through the skylight of the coach. It bounced off his leg. Richard's back home now, but he is very concerned about Ross."

Rail companies face heavy losses

Five of the newly-privatised train companies will make heavy losses during their franchise terms, and five others are likely to be in serious financial difficulty, according to a report out yesterday.

The Franchising Director will need substantial additional funds from the new government to keep train services running on the cash-troubled lines, the report said.

Keith Bill, national secretary of the pressure groups Save Our Railways, which commissioned the report said: "This report will shock most people in the rail industry, the City and of course rail passengers in many parts of Britain."

"The Prospects for the Franchised Railway" was compiled by Tim Powell, a former transport studies director at accountants and management consultants Coopers & Lybrand - the company which advised the Office of Passenger Rail Franchising on privatisation.

Britons still overdo sun-bathing

The sun-bathing British continue to get burnt up abroad, says a survey from the Home & Overseas travel insurance company. The tendency towards over-exposure comes even though more holidaymakers are aware of the dangers of lying too long in the sun. More than half of British tourists surveyed said they had problems with sunburn while on holiday, with nearly one in six saying they usually get burnt. One in ten sunbathers have to seek medical treatment for burns.

Actor fights to save Tewkesbury site



The actor Robert Hardy is making a last-minute appeal to stop houses being built on one of Britain's most famous battlefields.

Mr Hardy CBE, who is an authority on medieval history, is backing a campaign by the Battlefields Trust to halt planned development on part of Tewkesbury battlefield in Gloucestershire, site of a 15th-century clash during the Wars of the Roses. English Heritage says the houses would seriously affect the appearance of the battlefield, where the victorious House of York executed King Henry VI.

Mr Hardy, in Swindon for a Battlefields Trust conference, said: "I will suggest a direct approach by fax, a last-minute appeal to the borough council to think again, or at the very least to postpone its final decision. If it can be of any help, I will certainly do it personally as well as through the Battlefields Trust."

Children infected with hepatitis B

An official nine-year study will show today that five times more children than had been previously thought have been infected with hepatitis B, it is claimed.

The report, to be released by the Public Health Laboratory Service (PHLS), will show that one in every 200 children aged 13 and 14 have been infected with the potentially fatal liver disease, says the *Sunday Telegraph*. It will also reveal that 50 times more children aged up to 14 are infected with hepatitis A than officially declared - 800 in every 100,000.

Researchers warn that it is "anticipated that epidemics of hepatitis A are likely in the future as the susceptibility of the population increases".

Suicide fears in London jail

Overcrowding and budget cuts could increase the risk of suicides amongst inmates at a London prison, according to the Board of Visitors.

Morale among inmates and prison officers at Wandsworth Prison has dropped in the past year due to overcrowding and cuts, its annual report claimed.

Chairman Paul Infield said yesterday: "Prisoners are spending more time locked in their cells. One of the things which could happen when people are left alone with their thoughts is an increase in the risk of suicide."

Two tickets share lottery jackpot

Two ticket holders claimed Saturday's £9,926,050m National Lottery jackpot, each winning £4,963,025. The winning numbers were 46 28 31 1 41 3 with bonus number 33.

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Alan Greenspan: Market analysts are hoping for a more mellow mood after his wedding

Maybe Man learns the art of plain speaking - for once

Yesterday, there were no ifs, buts, or other verbal obfuscations about it. With a simple, irrevocable "I do" that allowed no misinterpretation, that delphic oracle of global financial markets, the Federal Reserve chairman, Alan Greenspan, was getting married.

Washington, proverbially, is a city where powerful officials and powerful reporters need each other. Even so, the Greenspan match is carrying matters to extremes. His bride is Andrea Mitchell, once NBC's one-woman assault team at the White House, now marginally less visible but no less aggressive as the network's correspondent covering the State Department.

Details of the ceremony were initially kept as tight as the deliberations of the Fed committee which sets interest rates - and threw markets into turmoil by raising them a fortnight ago. But the lavish truth began to filter out. The pair (a second marriage for both of them) were tying the knot at the opulent Inn at Little Washington in the Virginia countryside. Guests were then to sip champagne on a one-hour bus tour of the hunt country in spring time, perhaps indulging in a little of that "irrational exuberance" which Mr Greenspan famously abhors in the markets.

Despite his 71 years and perpetually lugubrious public mien, the chairman is said to be quite a wit in private, as well as an accomplished tennis player and saxophonist. But his true fame resides in his capacity for foggy circumlocution, unparalleled even among central bankers celebrated for their gliblybook.

"It's made myself too clear," he once told an eager inquirer in Congress, "you must have misunderstood me." It seems Ms Mitchell, 50, almost did too, when the proposal came at Christmas. "He's a man who's very careful with his words. I just didn't get it until the third time."

But most important of all, how will the markets react? "I'm bullish," financial analyst Al Goldman of St Louis says. "It's one of the 10 reasons I'm still positive about the market. Greenspan will be a much more mellow fellow on Monday - I hope." Rupert Cornwell, Washington

Oasis brothers deny they have £40m fortune

Superstars Noel and Liam Gallagher (right) earned a new sort of notoriety yesterday when they were named among Britain's wealthiest 500 in the Sunday Times Rich List. But there was an immediate riposte from their spokesman, who declared the published figures to be rubbish.

The brothers, who are the main members of Oasis, Britain's most popular band since the Beatles, were a new entry in the list, published yesterday. They went in at joint 461st position, with an estimated wealth of £40m.

However, the *Sunday Times* says it errs on the side of caution when calculating a person's worth - using indicators such as land, property, racehorses, art treasures or shareholdings - so the figure should therefore be regarded as conservative.

Contributions to the Gallagher's fortune came from the band's two LPs, which stayed in the charts for years after they were released, a series of No 1 singles and concert which included the Knebworth weekend, where they played to 250,000 fans over two days. In a concert which became an instant legend, on a par with Wood-



stock and the Beatles at Shea Stadium. Five per cent of the UK's population - three million people - applied for Knebworth tickets.

The band's spokesman would not put a figure on the brothers' true wealth, but said: "The current claims that Oasis have earned themselves £40m are rubbish."

"The band has worked very hard for the past five years and has certainly been very successful. But to say they have earned themselves millions each is totally wide of the mark."

"It is not exactly clear how this figure has been arrived at, but it has certainly been done without consulting the people that would know - the band, the management and the record company."

Secret donor was behind Eigg bid

A millionaire from the North East of England yesterday emerged as the mysterious benefactor who enabled the Scottish Islanders of Eigg to buy their island.

The woman, whose identity is being kept a secret, is believed to have given them around £900,000 - the bulk of the £1.5m purchase price.

Maggie Fyfe, the secretary of the Isle of Eigg Heritage Trust, who has lived on the 7,400-acre outcrop off the north west coast of Scotland for 21 years, said: "It is true that we were contacted by this woman who kindly came to our help, but I am sworn to secrecy - it was apart of the deal that the woman should remain anonymous." She said the woman was not famous or a celebrity. "This benefactor was like all the others who contributed to the fund - a member of the public who had become aware of our plight."

In December, an initial bid of £1.2m was rejected by the then owner, the German artist Maruma, and a month later the Trustees of the Heritage Lottery Fund turned down their appeal for financial help. On Friday, a creditor of Maruma, Hong Kong-based businessman Hans Rainer Ehrhardt, accepted the £1.5m bid.

briefing

FOOD

Frozen beefburgers fail to carry poisoning warnings

The majority of the UK's frozen beefburger producers are failing to put adequate warnings on their products to ensure consumer safety, according to a Food Commission survey published this week.

Despite repeated Government warnings of the risk of *E. coli* poisoning in minced beefburgers, and requests from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Foods for improved labelling, the commission found that one third of 28 popular brands did not warn buyers that the food should be cooked thoroughly, and three quarters failed to state the Chief Medical Officer's advice that the burgers should be cooked until there are no "pink bits" and "the juices run clear". Problem brands were said to include, Ross, Dalepak and Iceland.

Dr Tim Lobstein, co-director of the Food Commission, said: "We found that none of the products gave advice about handling raw meat, and only two products, both from Waitrose, gave the recommended cooking advice. The lack of regulation in this area is alarming."

BROADCASTING

Magazine advertisement criticised

Almost 250 viewers have complained to the Independent Television Commission about an advertisement for a magazine featuring articles about the life and crimes of killers like Fred West and Peter Sutcliffe.

Viewers complained that an advertisement in March for Marshall Cavendish's "part-work", *Murder in Mind*, was offensive, and glorified the murderers. It is the second time the advertisement has been the subject of complaints. A smaller number of complaints were lodged when it was first shown, in the South West TV region, last October.

The ITC decided that advertisements for publications about murder could not be banned, otherwise newspapers would be unable to advertise crime reports. However, it warned broadcasters that such "sinister" music as accompanied the advertisement might upset viewers, and told them to ensure that in future the music was not so deliberately melodramatic.

The advertisements were not screened in Scotland because of the anniversary of the Dunblane tragedy. Paul McCann

TRAVEL

Photography an expensive pursuit

France is one of the most expensive places to buy camera film, according to a survey by *Business Traveller* magazine, which found that a French roll would set tourists back about £4.11, while Britain was next on the list, with an average of £3.58.

However, if more way-out destinations are taken into account, the most expensive film is to be found in Greenland (£7.16 a roll). Other pricey places are Lesotho (£6.81), Iceland (£6.49), Barbados (£5.53) and Norway (£4.99).

While film may be pricey in France, at least international phone call prices have gone down. The cost of calls from France has more than halved in the last three years, the survey found.

And those who fancy a night at the theatre will have to fork out around £28 in the US, but only about £10 in Mexico.

Price of a roll of film	
1. France	£4.11
2. United Kingdom	£3.58
3. Switzerland	£3.55
4. Russia	£3.30
5. Australia	£3.15
6. Japan	£3.11
7. Germany	£3.10
8. Brazil	£3.01
9. United States	£2.83
10. South Africa	£2.61
11. Singapore	£2.33
12. Hong Kong	£1.63

LEISURE

Warning on garden tool injuries

A warning about the perils of gardening implements was issued by insurers yesterday as the unseasonably warm weather encouraged thousands of Britons to relax outside.

Figures released by the Association of British Insurers put lawnmowers top of the danger list, responsible for 5,400 injuries each year, followed by hedge trimmers, which injure 4,000 people.

Spades are said to result in 3,000 injuries while garden forks turn up another 2,500 accidents. Even flower pots are not to be trusted, leaving 2,450 people injured every year, while wheelbarrows account for nearly 2,000 accidents.

The ABI deputy director, Tony Baker, said: "Gardens are more dangerous places than most people think. Yet the vast majority of gardening accidents can be avoided by recognising the dangers and taking a few simple precautions."

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

Austria	£54.00	Wends	£65.00
Belgium	£59.00	Italy	£45.00
Canada	£65.00	Media	£52.00
Cyprus	£63.20	Mex	£43.00
Denmark	£61.25	Norway	£60.00
Fin Rep	£60.00	Portugal	£52.00
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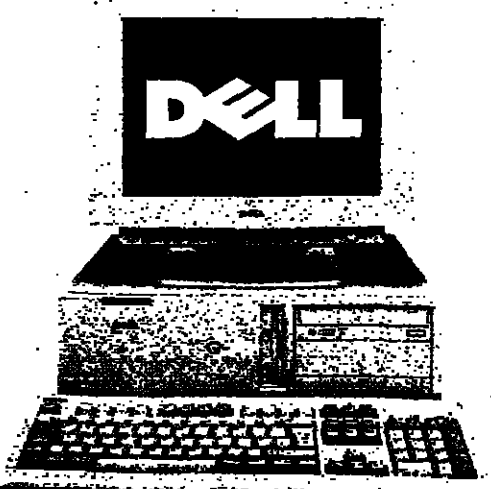


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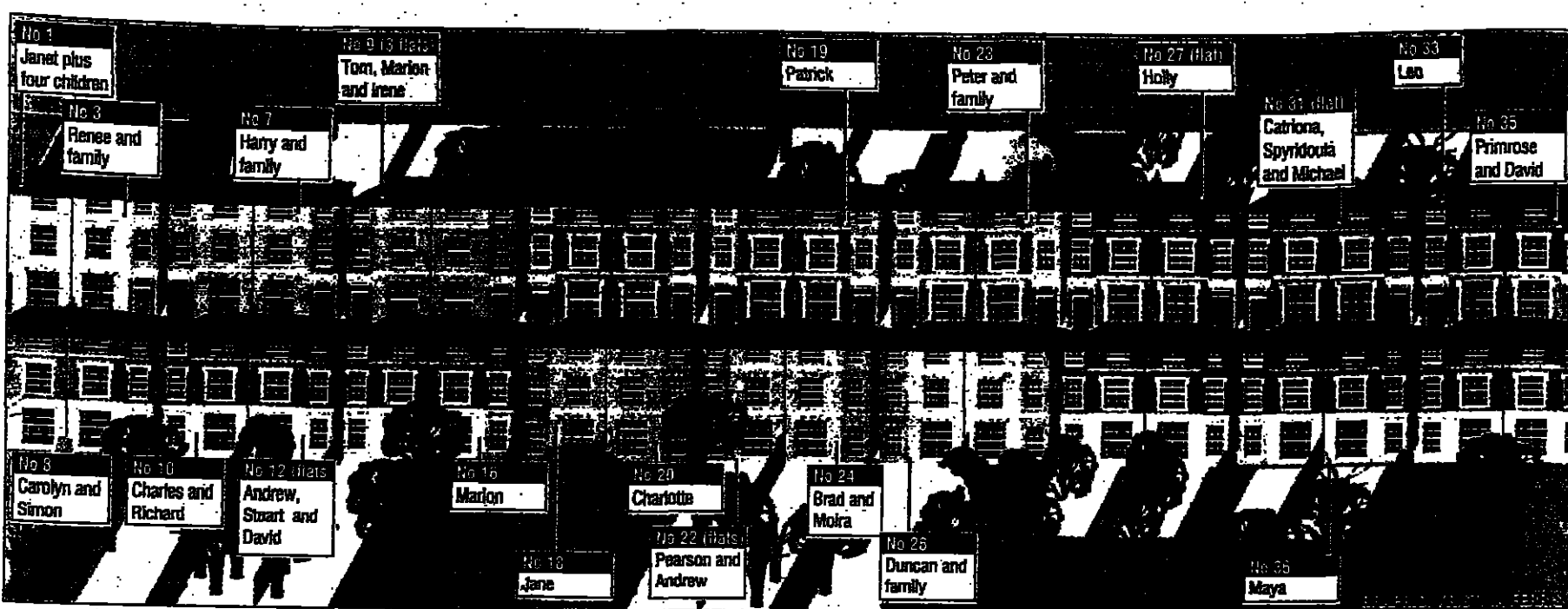


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Middle-age men turn to HRT to revive tired egos

Glenda Cooper
Social Affairs Correspondent

Middle-aged men are turning into a generation of "Alf Garnets with hormone patches trying to be Ziggy Stardust" - hoping to solve their mid-life crises by turning to hormone replacement therapy.

Members of the baby-boomer generation are turning to sex and drugs in the guise of testosterone replacement therapy to cure their middle-age blues, rather than employing the love and peace they espoused in their youth.

There is no biological evidence for the male menopause, the British Psychological Society annual conference heard yesterday, and slapping on hormone patches is no more than an attempt to find a "quick fix" to "jump start a dead libido".

More and more men are turning to HRT, which costs around £700 a year, to boost their sex drive although evidence shows that it works only in a small minority who have severely affected testosterone levels.

The increasing popularity of blaming everything on our hormones, said psychologist Lorraine Boul of Sheffield University, is leading to rising numbers of "Alf Garnets with hormone patches trying to be Ziggy Stardust".

She told the conference in Edinburgh that men who had identified the female menopause and its remedies had "fallen for their own invention" and adapted it to explain male feelings of insecurity.

A review of more than 100 studies had shown there was no evidence that sexual function in men was linked to a drop in sex hormones. "Testosterone levels drop by 1 per cent a year from the age of 30 and even at 50 per cent they were still quite able to function," said Ms Boul. Instead, the male menopause was a self-fulfilling prophecy.

She interviewed 308 men aged between 30 and 69 about their concerns about middle age. A quarter said they believed in the concept of a male menopause.

Many reported symptoms of tiredness and irritability and a handful said they had experienced erectile failure or other sexual difficulties. Four said they were on TRT.

But, said Ms Boul, the idea of a male menopause was a convenient way for "ageing hippies" to describe what was going wrong in their lives.

Officially grey Major, page 8

Behind the Net curtain

LONDON BOROUGH OF ISLINGTON
INTERNET STREET

Charles Arthur
Science Editor

First there was Coronation Street, then Albert Square, then Brookside Close; but now Britain has a real street for the 21st century - Internet Street.

The cast of characters sounds colourful enough: families; flatmates; employed and unemployed; taxi drivers; musicians; executives; young and old. But it isn't fictional.

For six months, 78 people in 26 houses on a north London street will take part in an experiment in which fibre-optic wire will replace the garden fence as the medium for exchanging gossip; browsing the World Wide Web replaces switching a net curtain as a way to see what's going on outside the house; and computer bulletin boards replace the newsagent's noticeboard.

The residents of the Islington street (whose location is being kept secret) are experimenting to see what communities of the next millennium might be like.

Each house has a Gateway 2000 multimedia computer and modem provided by Gateway; software is provided by Microsoft, including free connection to the Internet, using a separate, dedicated telephone line; residents also receive £20 a quarter towards the cost of Internet telephone bills and individual e-mail addresses.

They can access Microsoft Network, with its six channels of information, including election



Street cred: Maya, one of 78 participants in the Gateway/Microsoft pilot to "wire" residents of a north London street in an attempt to see how communities of the next millennium might function. Residents will keep a diary for six months, recording their experiences and which websites they visit. Photograph: Philip Meech

is turn on the computer to see if I have been sent any e-mail. I'm almost dependent if there isn't anything there. I've given friends my home e-mail address, because although I've got Internet access at work, I don't have time to surf the Net at anything like that.

Maya reckons that at home she now spends up to an hour a day at the weekend, and 10 minutes during the week using the Net.

The Internet offers access to text, pictures, computer games, sound and music clips, radio stations, video clips, TV "broadcasts" and video-conferencing on millions of computers worldwide. Its growth is still outstripping expectations, having grown from fewer than one million computers in 1991 to more than 16 million today, with no sign of slowing.

At present, it is doubling in size roughly every 38 months. The number of users is expected to reach 100 million by the end of the year - although that is a way to make a decision, says Maya.

Maya admits to being a relative novice. "I'm still learning around, really. I want to find out about meditation but you type in the search and it comes up with 10,000 responses. There's so much out there, but so much isn't of any interest."

By contrast, Duncan, a 23-year-old unemployed musician who lives with his parents at number 26, is already skilled in tapping the network for useful

information. "I've e-mailed friends in America. I'm using it mainly to try to find degree courses. I want to do a degree in music next year. And also to download music-oriented programs, and audio clips."

"And," he added, "to download games. But I've also been looking up stuff about the comet, Hale-Bopp, because we can see it from our house. Yeah, the computer's in my bedroom. It's a fantastic opportunity for me."

Duncan's father, Fred, is also

interested, though his work as a taxi driver - and the location of the computer - makes it harder to spend as much time on it as his son.

Judy Gibbons, UK director of Microsoft Network, said: "The project may tell us how people and communities will interact in the 21st century."

"The notion of online communities, and how the Internet can uniquely alter the way we live now, has been discussed for a long time - with little practical research. MSN is now creating the reality."

"Although people have created artificial Internet groups in the past, they have never seen how it would develop in an

existing neighbourhood before."

As part of the experiment, the participants are being asked to keep a diary to record their experiences - good or bad - and to say what sites they have visited on the Web. So far, most of them seem pleased with the results; the only bad moments have been computer crashes.

Microsoft expects that in time the Internet will bring local communities closer, as well as connecting people to wider experiences. But the early signs are that the people on the Internet street have not suddenly been inspired to talk to each other in the real world just because they are now able to in the virtual one.

Although Duncan was born just down the road, and has been living in his parents' house since he was three, he admits that he doesn't know many of his neighbours.

To test how the Internet might change that, Microsoft has set up a "notice board" in which project participants can leave text messages for anyone who reads them. "Yeah, you get those conversations," said Duncan. "It's peculiar seeing people on the street and wondering if you 'spoke' to them online."

"I know one family who are part of the project, but not many others. But it has given me motivation to find out about things I didn't know before. I'd rather have this than have to go down to the library."

LONDON BOROUGH OF ISLINGTON
INTERNET STREET

news; the global Internet, with its 15,000 "newsgroups" and millions of pages of data on the World Wide Web, where they can make airline and hotel reservations and order goods.

Participants are required to keep a diary, recording their experiences, including what sites they visit and whether they found using the Internet difficult or easy. A Microsoft "buddy" will be on hand to help with technical problems.

After just a fortnight, some of the residents in the street have already noticed the difference. Maya, a 35-year-old advertising executive who lives at number 36, said: "Now, the first thing I do when I get home

Atlantic crossing puts wind up record that had lasted 92 years

With so much traffic crossing the oceans it is remarkable that a record for crossing the Atlantic from New York's Sandy Hook Lightship to the Lizard in Cornwall, should have stood for 92 years, until yesterday.

In the early hours a Finnish-born Swede, Ludde Ingvall, skippered a French-built 80-footer, *Nicorente*, designed in America by the New Zealander Bruce Farr, and crewed by 14 more united nationals, including three women, to a record. He sliced 14 hours and 38 minutes off the time of 12 days, four hours and one minute set in 1905 by the 185-foot schooner *Atlantic* to set a new time of 11 days 13 hours and 22 minutes.

There is a faster time, achieved by the Frenchman Serge Madoc, of six days, 13 hours and three minutes, but that was in a 75-foot catamaran. And two monohulls claim faster times, but the 244-foot four-masted *Phoebe* is mechanical and Dennis Connor's



Ingvall: Racing against time

Whitbread 60 *Winston* did not have official timers to ratify a time 20 hours better than *Atlantic*'s.

That had been set because a millionaire called Wilson Marshall, with apparently little else to do, decided to try to win a \$5,000 gold cup put up by the Kaiser Wilhelm II, who was building his own yacht, *Meteor*, for the race he sponsored

across the Atlantic. The cup was later found to be pewter with gold plate.

Marshall gave the Scottish-born America's Cup winner Charlie Barr the job of skippering his toy, a decision he came to regret when Barr piled on more sail to take advantage of a big Atlantic low and drive the boat as hard as he could. Marshall complained Barr, five feet tall and notoriously belligerent, locked him in his cabin.

Ingvall, a former Whitbread Race skipper, is much more genial but a determined competitor. He also had the benefit of satellite weather scans being beamed to the boat and experts in routing, facing interpretations to the yacht.

He waited for what he thought would be the right sequence of weather systems coming out of the low-pressure factory which is Newfoundland and which fires the big late winter winds across the Atlantic to

Europe. For the first three days he was flying along, covering 1,000 of the 3,005 miles and on schedule for a nine-day crossing. But Murphy's Law inevitably intervened, and the high pressure which has dominated European weather for the last week produced lighter winds. "When you have lots of wind it's tough, exhilarating, and you are scared all at the same time," said Ingvall yesterday.

"But when you run out of wind, that's the worst. I have always raced against boats, so you concentrate on what your opponents are doing. This was against the clock and it was a terrific mental exercise to find the smartest way across. I'm sure old Charlie was up there, trying to pull the strings and stop us." Ingvall will campaign *Nicorente* in the Round Europe Race in June and then comes to Britain to defend his hold on the Fastnet trophies, all 16 of them, which he won in *Nicorente* in 1995.

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Aintree aftermath

Marooned in misery by the Mersey

They would normally have awoken with a hangover and a pocket probably the lighter for their flutter on the horses.

But 2,000 Aintree racegoers, evacuated after the terrorist bomb alerts at Saturday's Grand National, awoke yesterday morning still wearing their previous day's clothes in sport and leisure centres hurriedly commandeered as emergency accommodation.

Thousands more were scattered in hotels while a lucky few were the recipients of Scouse hospitality as members of the public generously threw open spare rooms.

Instead of a hangover, the headache yesterday was whether or not they would be allowed back to the Liverpool course to collect the cars and belongings they had been forced to leave behind.

A handful who arrived early at Aintree's main entrance were politely but firmly turned away.

The race course was a ghost town. Only the litter and the bookies' satchels lying where they had been dumped on the ground in the exodus were a reminder of the 60,000-strong throng which had gathered the previous afternoon to see Britain's premier steeplechase.

As dawn broke yesterday, hundreds of police officers and sniffer dogs could be seen searching the course buildings, rubbish bins and flower boxes.

Others checked each of the estimated 7,000 vehicles which were trapped within the police cordon after the bomb warnings.

At 2.45pm Merseyside police finally opened the gates for people - who had to have identification - to be re-united with their cars and coaches. For some, it was more than 30 hours since they had parked them as they headed off eagerly for their day's racing.

But when the words "operation Aintree" on the public announcement system first signalled the emergency on Saturday afternoon, normal racing went out of the window.

For three hours after the evacuation began at 3.15pm, the crowds had milled around outside, waiting to be let back in. But at 6.30pm, Merseyside police used their "sky-shout" tannoy attached to hovering



Obstacle course: Racegoers at Aintree yesterday hoping to collect their cars and belongings. Right, one punter sleeping in a sports hall. Photograph: Adam Butler/John Giles

2,000 racegoers get that morning after feeling. Stan Hey and Louise Jury report

helicopters to tell those below to "go home. Your vehicles will not be released tonight".

A stable boy, Phil Sharp, managed to evade police and stayed to tend the 100 horses, some of whom were quite distressed. He gave them all water before he, too, accepted orders to leave.

Police later relented and let the horses out after pleas from the RSPCA and Aintree officials. Most went home, though some were kept overnight at Haydock Park.

Arrangements for the humans were more complicated. As the weather deteriorated with rain sweeping in, thousands began to disperse to seek rooms or to try and meet up with friends and family.

With road traffic cordoned off around the race course, the local railway line took much of the strain and racegoers crammed

into carriages like Japanese commuters.

As with the evacuation itself, the trek into Liverpool was largely good natured although the long wait and an initial lack of information conspired with the realisation that hotel beds would not be easy to find to fray the most even of tempers.

At the Moat House, Paradise Street, jockeys still in their silks milled around in the reception hoping to find a friend with whom they could bivouac for the night.

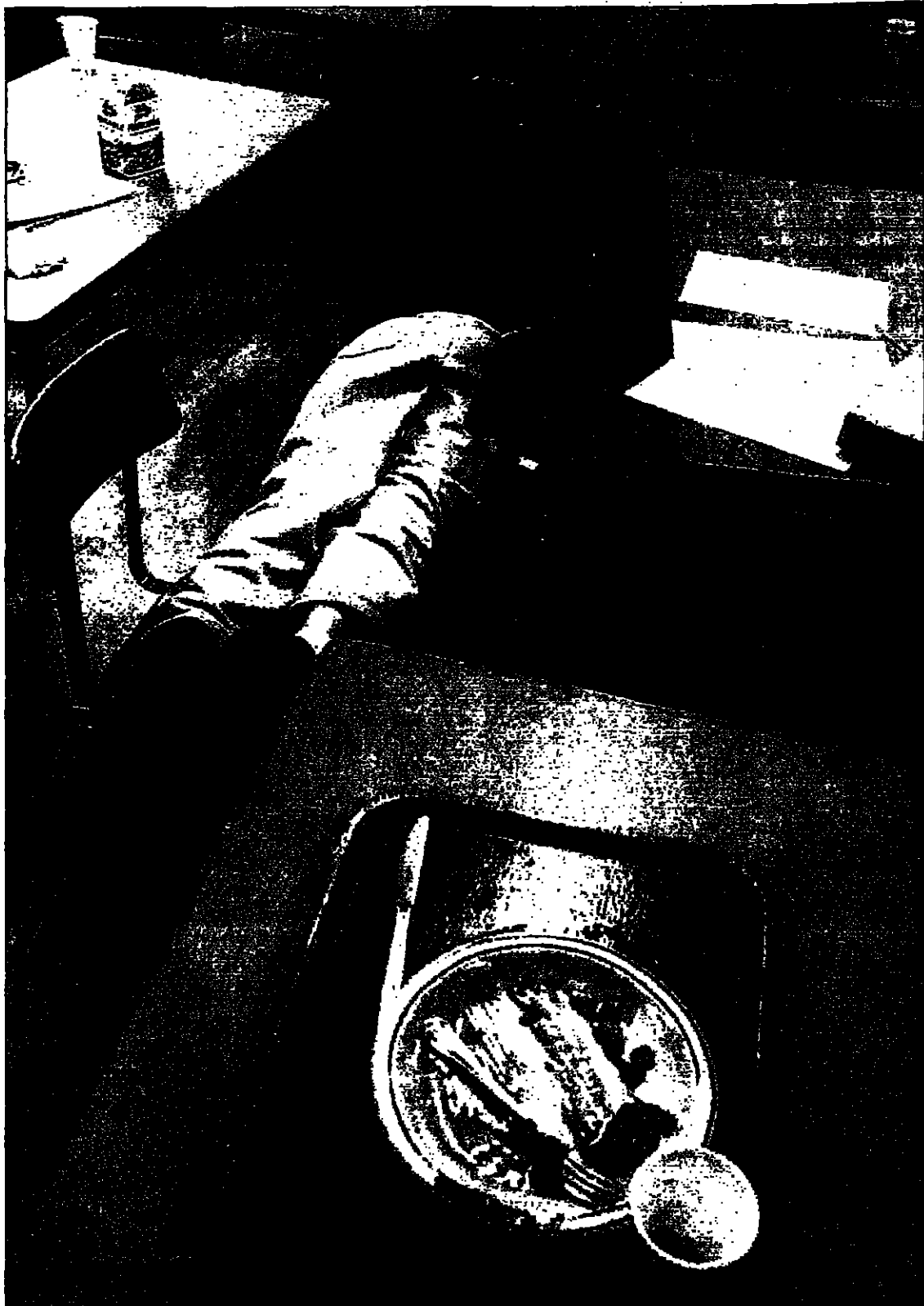
Meanwhile racegoers were told the bad news that there was no room. Hotels many miles outside the city were contacted by telephone.

In some cases, the afternoon prompted a burst of profiteering. Rooms at a hotel in Chester offered at £39.50 per night suddenly became £100.

But more frequent were signs of the kindness of human nature and old-fashioned British pluck.

As darkness fell, the news came through that the sports halls were to be opened. The Church of England, too, made free its halls. An Asda supermarket donated bread, cheese and eggs. The Salvation Army doled out supplies.

Peter Davies, spokesman for Liverpool City Council, said everyone had been fairly calm. But it was a sad and disappointing end to what should have been a great racing day.



Security headache for marathon organisers

Louise Jury

Security is now being reviewed for next Sunday's London marathon in the wake of the Grand National terrorist warnings and the spate of IRA bombs on the road and rail network.

A spokeswoman, Jane Cowmeadow, said the marathon always took the safety of its runners extremely seriously and worked closely with police. "We will keep everything under review," she said.

In what will prove a major security headache to police and anti-terrorist officers, about 27,000 people are expected to run the 26 mile course through the capital on Sunday. Hundreds of thousands more usually turn out to cheer on participants in one of London's most popular sporting occasions.

But the two bomb warnings less than an hour before Saturday's Grand National was due to take place show the chaos that can be caused by such events.

No explosives were found, but police and security officials could take no chances after the bombs which detonated at Wiltshire railway station in Cheshire and the further devices which brought havoc to the motorway system last week.

Security was also tightened for yesterday's Coca-Cola cup final at Wembley stadium between Middlesbrough and Leicester City.

Specialist police teams scoured the stadium conducting fingertip searches until minutes before fans were allowed in at 1pm, two hours before kick-off.

Many fans heeded police pleas to arrive early and to save themselves trouble in case of an alert by leaving their cars on the outskirts of the city and making the final part of the journey by public transport.

Alan Gale, of City and Suburban Parking, which runs the parking for Wembley, said traffic was relatively light.

"The bulk have come by public transport and the others seem to have come in coaches. What the reason for that is I couldn't say, but we certainly have less cars than normal."

At Wembley, Middlesbrough fan Geoff Parry said he thought the security at the stadium was very good. But he added that he did not understand why terrorists would target big public events.

"I think they're going down the wrong route by targeting the people and they'll never get any sympathy by doing it," he said.

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155 من الأصل

The nation famed for its rainfall may soon take water from the sea

Nicholas Schoon
Environment Correspondent

One of Britain's largest water companies is planning to build the country's first desalination plant, to turn large quantities of sea water into drinking water.

The pilot-scale plant will be large enough to supply a small town and would be sited on the Norfolk or Lincolnshire coastline, which are among the driest parts of the country. Anglian Water yesterday put the cost at £2m and said it would be financed from its innovation fund rather than water bills.

There are still only few desalination plants in the world and two of the largest are in Saudi Arabia - which has abundant supplies of oil to generate the large quantities of electricity which conventional desalination processes require.

Anglian is interested because it wants to see how much the costs of desalination can be lowered by technological improvement and because it wants to keep its options open if the climate becomes permanently drier.

Corporate affairs manager Mike Keohane said: "Being in the driest part of England with the greatest resource problems we felt that, looking into the future, we need to know more about desalination than we do."

Anglian has purchased an American company, Fluid Systems, which works on the special membranes now seen as offering the best way forward for desalination.

Even with the drought now deepening in southern and eastern England it seems highly unlikely that desalination plants

could be commercially viable here inside a decade.

More conventional measures, such as enlarging reservoirs or cutting wastage offer a much better return on investment.

But in the next century there may be a huge overseas market in dry, coastal nations with fast growing economies or even in Britain if dry years become a permanent fixture.

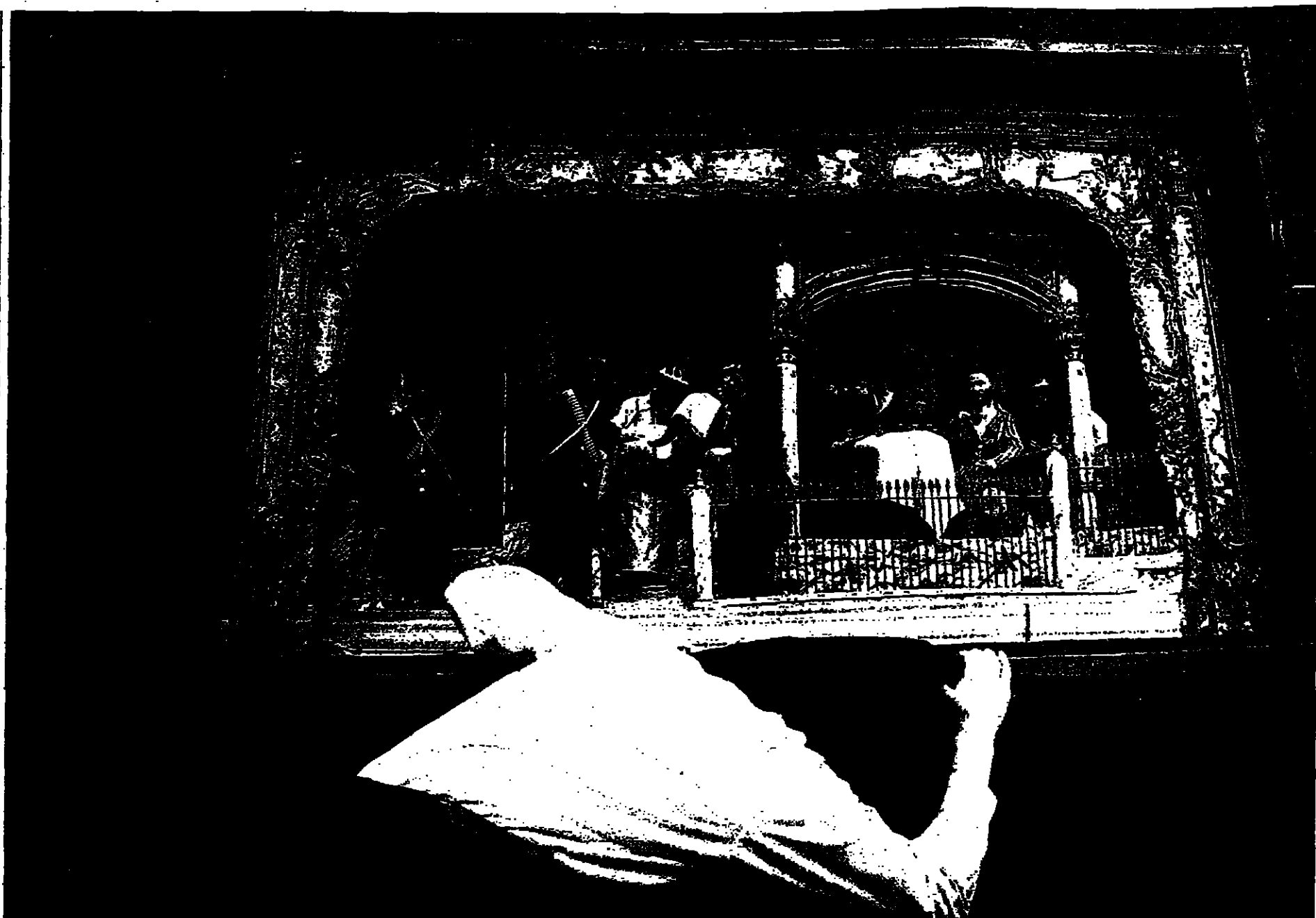
Anglian has not yet selected a site or applied to a council for planning permission to build a pilot plant. "It's going to be rather bigger than a box on a beach," said Mr Keohane.

But he hopes for "a certain sympathy" from council planners who appreciated the looming problems of water shortages when an application was made.

Anglian is interested in reverse osmosis technology in which sea water is kept under pressure in a tank with a special membrane across it. Water minus the salt passes through and accumulates on the other side. But even saltier brine left behind is pumped back into the sea.

Another smaller water company, Folkestone and Dover, is considering investing in desalination as well. But this is because some ground water sources in its part of eastern Kent have become increasingly saline due to old coalmining works which have allowed sea water from the nearby coast to penetrate.

Folkestone and Dover has also been looking at using the Channel tunnel to bring fresh water across from France using the structure's firefighting and cooling water mains.



Export art: A member of staff at Christie's setting up an automaton group for a China trade sale in London today. The late Qing dynasty mechanical tea-house scene is one of a pair made for the United States' Yukon Exposition of 1909 and is estimated to fetch between £80,000 and £120,000. Photograph: Kalpesh Lathiga

Fred West film deal kept secret, MP says

A deal between a group of film-makers and the Official Solicitor for the documentary rights on archive material about the serial killer Fred West was criticised by an MP yesterday.

Douglas French, MP for Gloucester, spoke out after it emerged that the documentary deal was made six months before an option contract for film rights was agreed in December with London-based Portman Entertainment.

Portman said later that it was

ditching its plans in the wake of a storm of public controversy over the deal.

Mr French yesterday criticised the Official Solicitor, Peter Harris, saying he found it "astonishing" that Mr Harris should have kept the earlier deal "secret". A spokesman for the Official Solicitor denied the earlier deal was kept secret.

Mr Harris has refused to disclose details of the contracts, which are part of his effort to maximise the estate of Fred

West for the benefit of his younger children.

Mr Harris was previously involved in sanctioning the official biography of West - the self-confessed killer of at least 10 young women. Royalties from the biography, *An Evil Love*, go to the estate.

Although the sums involved for the option contracts for film and documentary rights have not been disclosed, they are believed to be four figures.

Further cash, by way of a

form of royalties, could be expected to follow if any such film or documentary was made.

The deals with the unnamed film-makers and Portman are believed to be the only two in existence. The Portman option is still viable.

The archive material includes more than 140 hours of tapes of police interviews with Fred West, and tapes of conversations between him and his solicitor. It also contains a number of home-made movies of West

family life, a small collection of pornographic films, including sex scenes involving West's wife Rosemary, and personal items recovered from West's cell after he hanged himself while awaiting trial.

Mr French said: "Whether a documentary or a film, public outrage would be just the same. It is deeply painful and hurtful for the families and anyone connected with the West affair or victims."

"This documentary deserves

exactly the same condemnation as the Portman film plan."

"That this information was kept secret, I find astonishing and extremely disquieting."

"Any steps that can be taken to prevent a film going ahead should be taken," he said.

The spokesman for the Official Solicitor confirmed today that the documentary option deal was agreed in June, 1996. Mr Harris would not name the film-makers as the contract was confidential.

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Changing face of British youth: More altruistic, more fashion-conscious — but with less spare cash in their pockets

Selfless Swampy usurps lazy Kevin



Eco-warrior: Swampy, environmental protester and role-model for concerned teenagers

Reports by
Glenda Cooper

Today's adolescents have more in common with Swampy, the eco-warrior, than with Harry Enfield's creation Kevin the Teenager, with half of young people volunteering or campaigning on issues they believe in, according to new research.

Rather than the typical negative image of self-centered lazy teens — the so-called slacker generation — a strong streak of altruism is seen in Nineties' youth.

The Trust for the Study of Adolescents, a charitable organisation, surveyed more than a thousand 14- to 16-year-olds at three schools in Birmingham, Northumbria and on the South coast, interviewing in depth more than 100 pupils.

The researchers found more than half had done voluntary work which included helping the elderly, working as a first-aider, in a charity shop or as a youth worker. "Hardly a picture of an uninvolved, unconcerned

generation," said Debi Roker, the chartered psychologist who carried out the survey.

As many as one in ten were members of campaigning organisations such as Amnesty International, Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth, as well as organisations which campaign against homelessness.

you know, I can do something... I can offer them a chance to have things I take for granted," said a 16-year-old volunteer at Oxfam.

Nine out of ten young people said they gave money to charity and just under half had campaigned about something in their local area. Six out of ten had campaigned for a change

untary work, but that, said Dr Roker, was because many boys did not define what they did as voluntary or were nervous of admitting some of their activities. One 15-year-old boy who regularly protested overnight against live-animal exports at Coventry airport, told his parents he was staying with friends so they would not be concerned for his safety.

"We are quite pleased with the results," said Dr Roker. "A significant number of young people were investing time and effort working with other people to campaign for things they believe in."

"I hate the way that everybody has a downer on young people," added one young volunteer. "I do my bit. I write letters about live-animal exports and try to get things changed... I bet young people do more than adults."

Dr Roker added: "I think the idea of the slacker generation or the Kevin the Teenager myth is a stereotype which rarely exists and most young people would say that. They are more like Swampy than Kevin."



Slacker: Harry Enfield's ne'er-do-well, Kevin the Teenager, the archetypal adolescent

Everybody has a downer on the young [but] I bet they do more than adults

zoos, world hunger, and landmines.

Nearly six out of ten had boycotted something because of where or how it was made. This included French goods because of nuclear testing in the Pacific, or products that were tested on animals. "I think that sort of thing is really important... I wanted to make a difference and do something," said one 15-year-old member of Amnesty. "I just thought,

in school rules or policies, including school uniforms or setting up a regular charity collection.

Many teenagers also translated their beliefs into action with around one in six going on marches or rallies which protested about such things as nuclear weapons and landmines, or to support human rights.

A greater proportion of girls than boys said they were involved in vol-

Sporty children fill wardrobe with Nike, not Next

Clifford German

Retailers of traditional children's clothes are fighting a losing battle to attract a fashion-conscious generation more tempted by branded sportswear, a report claims.

While the conventional children's sales grew by just 0.3 per cent, reaching £3.178bn last year, the sports and leisure sector rose by about 10 per cent to £1.4bn, according to Verdict Research, a consultants specialising in the retail trade. Replica football kits alone brought in £150m last year, and the branded sportswear market as a whole is growing by 10 per cent a year, according to the report. On present trends, sportswear will make up 40 per cent of the entire sector within a few years, it predicts.

Hardest hit has been the small independent retailer, Verdict's chairman, Richard Hyman, said. "Ten years ago kids did not give a hoot about brand names. Now they are very fashion-conscious. The traditional stores have allowed competition from the sports and

leisure shops to take trade from them. We are looking at how the high-street stores are responding and why children are wearing Adidas and Nike on their chests and not St Michael, for instance."

Demand for conventional clothing is affected by the falling birthrate, which is expected to drop by a further 9 per cent in the next 10 years. Supermarkets, led by Asda and its George brand, Tesco's Items and the recently launched Kids Own at Safeway, are taking a significant share of the market, Verdict says. But they are never likely to be "destination outlets", trade jargon for the places where children want their parents to shop. Specialist chains such as JJB Sports and JD Sports are more favoured.

Next and Gap win praise for re-engineering adult styling for smaller bodies but Marks & Spencer, the largest single childrenswear retailer, gets low marks for conservative styling and high prices. BHS gets better marks for style but has failed to increase its sales.



Sporting instincts: Boys displaying their generation's preference for branded sportswear on the Isle of Dogs in east London yesterday

Photograph: Emma Boam

Pocket money falls short for first time in a decade

Simon Reeve

Children's pocket money has declined for the first time in a decade, possibly indicating financial prudence in the run-up to the general election, and raising the spectre of bitter strikes and demonstrations in homes across the country.

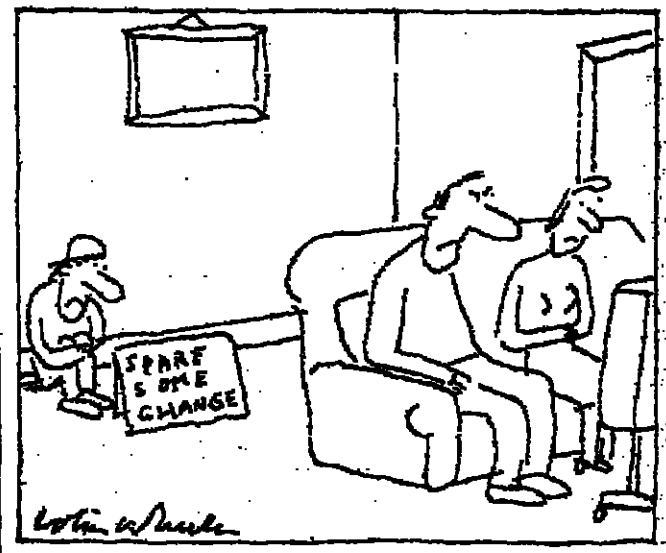
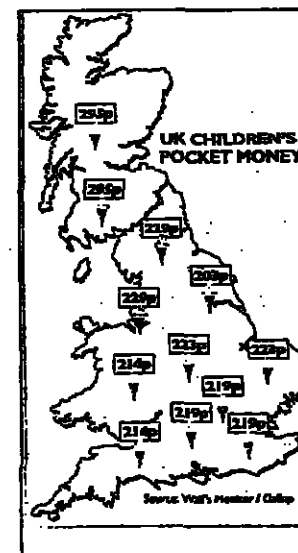
After rising steadily year-on-year since 1987, the latest Wall's Pocket Money Monitor for 1997 reveals the weekly rate has fallen to just £2.33. This is a seven per cent decrease on last year, and is a blow to children who remember the dramatic 35 per cent increase in 1996.

The Wall's Monitor reveals that children are becoming increasingly shrewd when it comes to their finances, with 36 per cent saving their money compared with just four per cent when the monitor was first started in 1975.

Rather than spending money on treats and sweets, children are now more likely to invest their money in a bank or building society. Many attribute this impressive fiscal awareness to the effects of the Thatcher government, but the number owning shares or investing in Personal Equity Plans goes unrecorded.

"Children are taking a much more responsible attitude towards their pocket money than their parents probably did when they were children," said Sue Keane, a consumer psychologist.

The Wall's Monitor, for



Rather than spending money on sweets and treats, children are putting their cash into PEPs

which 1,323 parents of children aged between five and 16 were interviewed, also reveals some interesting regional differences. Scottish parents are the most generous, giving their children an average of £2.95 each, 66 pence more than their nearest rivals in the North-west, and 92 pence ahead of those in the poorest region, the North and

North-east. Scottish children's total weekly income, which includes earnings from jobs, gifts and pocket money, is also the highest, at £5.14, well above their closest rivals in the North and North-east on £4.62.

Nationally, the total weekly income is also down on last year by seven per cent. Children in Wales and the

West of England are the overall poorest, coming last for handouts and lowest but one for pocket money. "Children may be wiser in the 1990s, but no matter how much they save, children are still children, and they continue to use their pocket money to treat themselves," said Lizanne Byrne, Wall's Pocket Money Monitor Researcher.

Wall's also has news which may cause rows within many households: girls are now receiving substantially more pocket money (£2.48) than boys (£2.19) — their strongest ever lead.

DAILY POEM

'They shut me up in prose'

By Emily Dickinson

They shut me up in Prose —
As when a little Girl
They put me in the Closet —
Because they liked me "still" —

Still! Could herself have peeped —
And seen my Brain — go round —
They might as well have lodged a Bird
For Treason — in the Pound —

Himself has but to will

And easy as a Star
Abolish his Captivity —
And laugh — No more have I —

This week's poems come from the new Penguin Classics anthology of *Nineteenth-Century American Poetry*, edited by William C. Spengemann with Jessica F. Roberts (Penguin, £9.99).

This poem, dating from 1862, is one of more than 1,500 works which were left in manuscript form by Emily Dickinson at her death in 1886.

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مكتبة من الأصل

election '97

Pressure grows for Hamilton to quit

Secret ballot to seal embattled MP's fate

Clare Garner

The controversial former Tory minister Neil Hamilton looked dead in the water last night after pressure on him to stand down intensified.

Not only was television journalist Martin Bell last night named as the anti-sleaze candidate to stand against him, but it was confirmed that a secret ballot would be held at tomorrow night's local Conservative Association meeting on Mr Hamilton's candidature.

Following Mr Bell's appointment, constituency support fell away further. Alan Barnes, chairman of Tatton's Conservative Association and a loyal Hamilton supporter until last night, agreed to hold a secret ballot to enable activists to vote privately, without pressure, on whether they wish to ditch the MP who has been at the centre of the cash-for-questions row.

Dissidents were rejoicing last night that Mr Barnes had agreed to a secret ballot, and the Labour Party and Liberal Democrats were excited about what they saw as the highly possible prospect of Mr Hamilton being ousted.

"I'm absolutely delighted," said Robin Estridge, 70, a life-long Conservative, on hearing the news. "I hope the first thing that will happen from the ballot, forgetting Mr Bell, is that Mr Hamilton will be deselected in order that we can have a genuine and proper Conservative candidate."

"As I understand it, there are candidates waiting in the wings who can stand as Conservatives. I assume if that happened, Mr Bell would stand down. As a long-time Conservative voter what we want is a candidate we can support. If there is a secret ballot and it goes against Mr Hamilton that will be the best possible outcome."

Derek Squirrel, a party member, said: "It is only right

to hold a secret ballot. People should be allowed to make up their minds without coming under pressure."

Neil Derbyshire, the Liberal Democrats' chairman of the national candidates committee, praised Mr Bell as "an honourable, open character who I have confidence in. The local party will endorse him on Monday week."

Earlier yesterday, Mr Hamilton's agent dismissed the possibility of a secret ballot as "highly unlikely". Had Mr Barnes not backed down, the party rules dictated that only a round-robin signed by one-third of all local members would force a secret ballot. There were about 120 at a recent meeting, and one of Mr Hamilton's officials said that only 12 had signed a letter calling for the secret ballot at the weekend. "They are trying to keep the story going," he added.

When asked on BBC1's *Breakfast With Frost* programme yesterday how he would like members of the Conservative Association in Tatton to vote on Tuesday night, the Prime Minister, John Major, said: "I've not interfered with these matters, they know their Member of Parliament, they know he vigorously protests that the main charges against him are untrue and that matter is being investigated."

Mr Major said he agreed with the comment by former minister Alan Clark that: "You must separate banking which everybody does from taking bribes." "I don't think there's any doubt about that," said Mr Major. "Alan puts it in his own colourful way but I agree with his, with his remarks."

He added: "If Sir Gordon reports that people have behaved very badly, if they have behaved well, below the standards required of a Member of Parliament then Parliament has very draconian power."



Sunday stroll: Mr Hamilton and his wife, Christine, leaving St Marys, their local church, in Alderley Edge, Cheshire, yesterday

Photograph: Newsteam

How our quality of life has become poor relation of economic growth

Diane Coyle

Economics Editor

Rising pollution, inequality, crime and social tension are the explanations for a dramatic reduction in economic well-being in Britain since 1980, and again since 1992, according to an updated index of sustainable economic welfare to be published this week.

The index, published by the New Economics Foundation and Friends of the Earth, is a widely used measure of the economy that overcomes some of the disadvantages of Gross Domestic Product, the conventional indicator of an economy's growth. The new figures mark its first update for five years.

The two groups are calling on political parties to switch the focus of their economic policies from growth *per se* to the quality of life. The new indicator adjusts official growth figures for changes to a variety of quality-of-life measures.

GDP adds together all forms of economic activity whether these enhance well-being or not, and takes no account of the depletion of resources or any kind of loss of assets.

So, for example, a hurricane which destroys several houses will boost GDP because of all the reconstruction work that follows it.

"Much of what it adds in fact

The politics of well-being



serves to reduce the quality of life. It is as if economists have not yet learned to subtract." The most contentious adjustment the index of sustainable economic welfare (ISEW) makes to GDP is a deduction for income inequality. This is the aspect of the alternative indicator which some economists

think involves too great a value judgment.

As a result of this criticism of the index when it was first published, the update takes a more cautious approach. The downward adjustment for growing inequality is smaller than it was last time.

However, the paper defends the need to reduce measured well-being as a result of inequality. "A wide range of studies... now reveal correlations between trends related to conventional economic growth, such as the inequality of earnings (now at its widest this century) and social problems such as emotional stress, ill-health and the erosion of trust."

It also points to rising violent crime rates, youth delinquency, divorce and family break-up as economically costly results of inequality.

Another big adjustment between GDP and the alternative indicator is a correction for environmental degradation. The need for this type of adjustment in principle is almost universally accepted amongst economists.

The ISEW takes account of the depletion of non-renewable resources such as North Sea Oil. The annual cost of the depletion of oil reserves has amounted to more than £50bn a year for the past five years, or about five times the bill for un-

employment. It also makes a deduction linked to carbon dioxide emissions as an indicator of the UK's contribution to global warming, and for other pollution costs.

A third set of adjustments concern what the researchers describe as "defensive expenditures". These are items that are added to GDP but actually reflect reductions in the quality of life.

Examples include health spending on the treatment of asthma due to pollution - asthma has become the third biggest cause of hospital admissions after heart disease and strokes; spending on security measures because of rising crime; and the cost of car accidents.

The paper accepts that its procedures involve value judgments but points out that excluding them is equally judgmental.

The quality of life, it concludes, "Does not easily reduce to quantitative assessment, single perspectives or policy prescriptions."

"Yet if there is to be life beyond growth, economists and politicians need to embrace this complexity."

More Isn't Always Better, information available from New Economics Foundation, 1st Floor, Vine Court, 112 Whitechapel Road, London E1 1JE.

Labour gets tough over single currency

Anthony Bevins

Political Editor

Labour considerably hardened its stance on the European single currency yesterday, saying that if a Labour government did not join up in 1999, it was most unlikely to join before the next election.

That statement by Robin Cook, the shadow Foreign Secretary, left Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, spluttering that Mr Cook's leadership colleagues would be "furious".

Mr Cook told London Weekend Television's Jonathan Dimbleby programme: "If you didn't join in 1999, it is unlikely you would be joining in the course of the next Parliament."

The Labour manifesto says: "There are formidable obstacles in the way of Britain being in the first wave of membership. If EMU [Economic and Monetary Union] takes place on 1 January 1999."

In a debate with his Conservative and Liberal Democrat opponents, Mr Cook said yesterday: "If you didn't join in 1999,

it's very difficult to see a Government that has taken the decision that Britain wasn't ready in 1999, coming to the decision that it would be ready by the year after, or the year after that."

"So, in the event that Britain doesn't join in the first wave, whilst we will continue to review this and whilst of course we'll continue to look very carefully at the figures, I would have thought the probability is that one is looking towards the subsequent parliament."

Mr Rifkind protested: "Gordon Brown is going to be rather furious with Robin Cook. I bet that remark wasn't cleared with him. Let's wait to see whether Tony Blair clears what Robin Cook has just said, and whether Gordon Brown confirms it."

But while the Foreign Secretary is barred from going beyond the Cabinet's agreed line on the single currency, hammered out between the Prime Minister and the Chancellor on 23 January, he did appear to mark out a contradiction in the Conservative Party manifesto.

That says in the European

section: "We will not accept other changes to the Treaty that would further centralise decision-making, reduce national sovereignty, or remove our right to permanent opt-outs."

Mr Rifkind said yesterday: "Robin on this programme a few weeks ago said if the single currency happened, and it seemed to be working for France and Germany, then Britain ultimately would have to join."

"I think that's the wrong criteria. I think you have to judge what are the implications for the United Kingdom, both economic and jobs implications, but also whether any benefits of a single currency would be so substantial as to outweigh the loss of national decision-making on crucial things like interest rates or of course mortgage rates."

Menzies Campbell, the Liberal Democrat spokesman, said later: "Robin Cook's shift in position yet again today and Tory divisions on a single currency means only one party has a clear and unambiguous proposal to make to the British people on this issue."

The Three Chancellors strike a wrong note

Colin Brown

Chief Political Correspondent

Standing at lecterns like the Three Tenors, the Three Chancellors gave a full dress rehearsal last night for the first television debate by the Three Leaders, if it ever goes ahead.

The show on BBC2 highlighted the difficulties within the first few minutes, as the chairman, Peter Jay, repeatedly intervened to allow the Liberal Democrats' Malcolm Bruce to be heard. It was like the conductor stopping the music in mid-air for José Carreras, because he could not get a word in edgewise between Gordon Brown's Plácido Domingo and Kenneth Clarke's Luciano Pavarotti.

The invited audience appeared to be on Mr Bruce's side, giving him more applause than

the two main turns. There was also the flash of competition, which the great tenors cannot hide, when Mr Clarke accused Mr Brown of playing to the gallery for cheap applause.

It was watched closely by the spin doctors, because the format was the same as that suggested by the BBC for the great leadership debate, before Labour pulled the plug on the talks. The spin doctors quickly came to the conclusion that they were right to say "no". "It's just not working," one adviser said, as the debate was interrupted yet again.

A lunchtime programme on ITV hosted by Jonathan Dimbleby between the "three Foreign Secretaries", Malcolm Rifkind, Robin Cook, and Menzies Campbell, flowed more freely. But the rigid formalities of the questions put by Mr Jay

never allowed the three Chancellors to be tested off their scripts. In a reversal of traditional roles, Mr Brown challenged the Tory Chancellor on where he was going to get the money to finance the tax breaks for the family. Mr Clarke said: "We will fund the change... as we get the improved finances, as I financed 1p off taxes." Then he hit back: "All your people say there will be £2.5bn for council house building a year... How are you going to pay for that?"

Neither Mr Clarke nor Mr Brown would agree with Mr Jay that whoever is returned to No 11 Downing Street on 2 May will have to put up taxes to fund their spending programmes. Which leaves only one option - they may have to privatise programmes like this. The Three Tenors did it. Why can't they?

Clarke rejects rise in interest rates

Diane Coyle

Economics Editor

Kenneth Clarke is unlikely to be persuaded to raise interest rates when he meets Eddie George, Governor of the Bank of England, for what could be their last monthly monetary meeting on Thursday. Whatever it accomplishes for his image as a prudent manager of the economy, it would also trigger a round of mortgage rate increases just three weeks before the general election.

The Bank has now been at loggerheads with the Chancellor for six months. Many City economists see Mr Clarke's ability to shrug off the Governor's advice

to raise the cost of borrowing during the pre-election period as evidence that politics ultimately outweighs prudence under the monetary arrangements introduced after the Exchange Rate Mechanism crisis.

Mr Clarke's refusal to take the Bank's advice means that interest rates and mortgage rates will go up after the election, and perhaps by more than they otherwise might have. If Gordon Brown is the new Chancellor, he is expected to agree to an increase of a half a percentage point, perhaps as early as the 7 May meeting.

This would prompt the big mortgage lenders to increase

their rates. Some are expected to start raising the cost of fixed-term mortgages as early as this week.

This latest episode is not the first time Mr Clarke has stood firm against the Bank, but it is the longest clash they have had.

Behind the row lies the fact that the Government has not met its inflation target for nearly three years. Although there is a fair chance that figures next week will show underlying retail price inflation approaching its target of 2.5 per cent, it is widely expected to remain on target for a few months at most.

Since the monthly meetings were introduced at the start of 1993, he has turned down Mr

George's advice on four previous occasions. Mr Clarke turned down Mr George's recommendations to raise rates in May 1995 and September 1996, and cut rates against his advice in January and June 1996.

The Chancellor has also been downplaying the Bank's argument, ever since the quarter point base rate increase last October, that the economy is growing fast enough to pose a serious threat of higher inflation in future. The strong pound has been his excuse for overruling the evidence of an inflationary boom.

Mr Clarke has got away with flatly ignoring the Bank of Eng-

land for two reasons. One is that his first clash with the Governor, in May 1995, turned out to be a lucky call. The economy did, in fact, slow down without the higher interest rates the Bank had called for.

The second reason, however, is that the financial markets are so sure there will be a new Chancellor who will take the appropriate action next month that a short delay will not do serious damage to the economy.

There is clear evidence of a consumer boom and faster pay growth, but the impact of the pound's high exchange rate on exports will offset the effects on inflation.

Sell-off scheme catches Major off guard

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

A Labour drive to privatise surplus public assets and services caught the Conservatives – and at least one member of the Shadow Cabinet – by surprise yesterday.

But John Major and Michael Heseltine promptly exploited the policy change to argue that it provided further evidence that Labour could not be trusted.

Mr Major told BBC 1's *Breakfast with Frost* programme that Tony Blair had used the word "trust" 20 times during his manifesto launch. "Well, in the three days since then, they've had three years to prepare the manifesto for the Labour Party and in three days it's begun to fall apart ...

"After all they've said about privatisation you now see stories that they're going to privatise."

The Prime Minister said the policy should have been in the manifesto, "or the Labour Party are slithering around and have changed their policy; it must be one or the other."

But Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor, told BBC Radio 4's *The World this Weekend* that the policy had been contained in the manifesto.

Under the "iron grip" that he would maintain on public spending, all government departments would be given a November deadline to draw up a national register of their assets.

"We will then make a decision about whether assets are best kept in the public sector – property, land and buildings – but if they are of no further use to the public sector, we will take the decision to use our assets properly and we will take the decision to get rid of assets that are of no further use to us."

That policy of "rooting out waste and inefficiency" was included in the manifesto – but that was restricted to assets, and not services, which is

where the policy change has appeared.

The party's business manifesto, due out this week, also says: "We will increase disclosure of these departmental asset registers for public scrutiny as part of the move to resource accounting."

"We will ask the National Audit Office to conduct value-for-money surveys on key areas within asset-rich departments."

But in a speech in the City today, Mr Blair will go much further and speak of the privatisation of services.

There is no reference to that in the manifesto, which says instead: "We will ensure that self-financing commercial organisations within the public sector – the Post Office is a prime example – are given greater commercial freedom to make the most of opportunities."

Today, the Labour leader will say: "Where there is no overriding reason for preferring the public provision of goods and services – particularly where those services operate in a competitive market – then the presumption should be that economic activity is best left to the private sector, with market forces being encouraged to operate."

In a statement of Labour's "wobbly weekend", Mr Heseltine said last night: "Faced with difficult questions on privatisation, Blair promised everything, despite commitments to the contrary. If he could have, he would have privatised the kitchen sink. But where was privatisation in the manifesto?"

Earlier, on *Sky News Sunday* with Adam Boulton, Mr Heseltine said: "I've spent my political life fighting the Labour Party over privatisation. Now they suddenly say because they've got their economic policy into a thundering mess with a £12bn black hole, they say, 'Well, we'd better have a bit of privatisation'."



Streets of London: Glenda Jackson (left) canvassing in Hampstead for the Labour Party, with Elizabeth Gibson (right) for the Tories, on the same path Photograph: Adnan Derris

Jackson Five top the poll on green streets

Clare Garner

Stand back for the new Jackson Five – a band of five females vying for a place in the political charts. The only male opposition is a one-man band in the shape of Sixties crooner, Ronnie Carroll.

The Number One slot is Hampstead and Highgate, where Glenda Jackson, the double Oscar-winning actress turned Labour politician, is defending a slender majority of 1,440 against an unprecedented number of female candidates.

It is the first time in British political history that so many women have fought for a single constituency. In just five years, the sex ratio of candidates for the north-London seat has turned full circle. In 1992, Ms Jackson stood as the only woman against six men. Now she finds herself up against four women – and Mr Carroll

Women candidates buck trend as they outnumber a single male

– fourth in the Eurovision Song contest with "Say Wonderful Things to Me" – who is standing for Natural Law Party.

The five female candidates will be spending the next three weeks pacing the famously leafy streets, not least Ms Jackson herself, who turned down a starring role in the national campaign in order to concentrate on the home front.

Ms Jackson, 60, is delighted that men have been relegated to token fringe status in that seat. "It's terrific," she said. "It's scandalous that more than 60 years after all women got the vote, women MPs still represent only 10 per cent of the House of Commons."

She anticipated a less "adversarial" ethos as a result of the women-dominated list. "As far as the campaign in the constituency goes, it should make

for some very interesting, concentrated debates, unlike the extremely insulting, personal abuse we have seen from the leader of the Conservative Party [yesterday]."

As number two in Labour's

cantly, Mr Carroll, and, most significantly, Elizabeth Gibson (Conservative).

Ms Gibson is adamant that she will see the seat returned to Tory rule. "I believe people voted for Glenda Jackson be-

one field and now I'm going to be a success in another."

Ms Gibson, a teacher and the mother of two children, insists she will not be impeded by the fact that her husband, Keith Best, is the disgraced former Tory MP convicted of making multiple BT share applications in 1987. "It was 10 years ago," she said. "He paid a heavy price. He's now thrown himself into working in the voluntary sector. He is a tremendous support to me and, quite frankly, apart from the fact that the media come up with this, people just don't register any more. It's in the past."

Patsy Prince, 26, is a law graduate who describes herself as a "jobbing actress". She dabbles in stand-up comedy and has made appearances at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, but she hopes to make it big-time.

In one sense, she says, she shops her opposition. "Yes, I admire Glenda Jackson as an actress, but not as a politician," she said.

A predominantly female campaign is an exciting prospect to Ms Prince. "It shows that women are interested in political issues more than they used to be," she said. "People are always going on about there not being enough women in Parliament. It shows that we're not just there to be told what to do by men."

But gender does not come into it, as far as Ms Gibson is concerned. "I think of myself as a Conservative candidate upholding Conservative values," she said.

"Yes, I happen to be a woman, but at the end of the day I'm a Conservative. We don't believe in quotas. We believe in people rising to the top through ability – just like Margaret Thatcher."

significant shorts

Health scare forces Scottish MP to quit

The Labour MP Willie McKelvey last night confirmed that he is standing down from the election race after a health scare. Mr McKelvey, 62, gave no details but is thought to have suffered a minor stroke last week. Friends said he had gone to hospital after feeling unwell while canvassing the previous day and tests showed he had suffered a minor stroke.

His departure means a candidacy contest for his Kilmarnock and Loudon seat in Ayrshire, seen by some as under threat from the Scottish National Party, over whom he had a majority of just under 7,000 in 1992. The former shop steward had held the seat since 1979. Possible contenders to succeed him include Mike Watson, the Glasgow Central MP whose seat has now vanished under boundary changes and Tom McCabe, leader of South Lanarkshire council.

Labour's Scottish spokesman, George Robertson, said that Mr McKelvey, who has been chairman of the all-party Scottish Select Committee since 1994, would be greatly missed as "one of the most popular and highly regarded of backbench MPs".

Labour pledge on Eurofighters

Labour gave a major boost to Britain's defence industry yesterday with a firm pledge to go ahead with plans to purchase 232 Eurofighters. Tory politicians had raised doubts about Labour's commitment to the full project, which will cost British taxpayers £15.4bn. Some 40,000 jobs around the country depend on the success of the four-nation programme.

Dr David Clark, the party's defence spokesman, said he had written to the defence ministers of Britain's Eurofighter partners. He confirmed in personal letters to Germany's Volker Ruehe, Italy's Beniamino Andreatta and Eduardo Serra that a future Labour government would press ahead with plans to buy 232 jets for the RAF. The move will increase pressure on Germany to break the financing deadlock threatening the future of the Eurofighter project. Labour said: "Eurofighter is vital to meet the demands of the armed forces."

Businesses fail to get message

The attempts by the three main political parties to get their message across to small businesses in their manifestos last week may be destined for failure, according to a survey published today. Four out of 10 businesses still did not know which party had the best specific policies for the sector, it said. Half of those questioned did not know which of Labour, the Tories or the Liberal Democrats would be best at cutting red tape.

But the Conservatives were still the party of small businesses, according to the Office World quarterly survey, which found the Tories had increased their share of the vote to 43 per cent from 39 per cent. Support for Labour has fallen by one point to 22 per cent, while the Liberal Democrats have moved up to 9 per cent from 12 per cent and the Referendum Party moved up to 8 per cent from 5 per cent.

Tories pin hopes on the army of floating voters

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

Strategists believe undecided voters will deliver their salvation

The undecided voters on whom John Major and Tory strategists are pinning their hopes – the army of "don't know" – have been on every street where the Prime Minister has campaigned.

As varied in political allegiance as in social background, this group, accounting for perhaps a quarter of the electorate – according to the Tories – include those who have decided not to vote, some who will not tell pollsters how they intend to vote and a third group which has yet to come to a decision on how to vote on 1 May.

First-time voter Jill, a sixth-former at a state school near Birmingham, is undecided because she has never known a Labour government: she worries that Blair et al lack experi-

ence; she is impressed by Major, but is worried about disunity in his party.

Swampy man, 21, heckled Major "what about sleaze?" in a West Country shopping centre was pushed aside by police. Asked if he is old Labour, he replied: "No, I'm just an old hippie." He has a single issue interest in the environment and lives in a squat, but did not "get it together" to go on the voters' register.

Young black man, 19, student at Luton University, watched Major on his walkabout and said the parties failed to represent his concerns and those of the ethnic communities. He felt excluded from the campaign by three predominantly white parties led by three white males in their 40s. He may not vote.

Gran, 70, was 52 when Margaret Thatcher came to power; she remembers Labour in office and will not vote for the party. She will not tell opinion pollsters how she will vote because "it's a private matter". She helped Major to victory in 1992 but is worried about selling her house to pay for long-term care.

Jeff, mid 40s, a frozen food wholesaler, in Eastleigh, Hants, a key marginal, says he is "between" and between the Tories and Labour. He thinks Labour has become "more electable" but worries about "personalities" behind Blair. He feels it may be time for a change, but is wavering. Eastleigh was won

from the Tories by the Liberal Democrats in the by-election.

Ruth, 49, a lone unemployed parent, is unimpressed by the Tory offer of a tax-break for families, for which she will not qualify: she is a past Tory voter, but is disillusioned in her search for a job; she feels she is being treated like a cipher. She will vote for the party that can help her find work and will make her mind up during the last days of the campaign.

John and his wife, Margaret, are "undecided" – we want to be sure about the manifesto policies. They live in Croydon, and believe the economy is picking up, but "we are not too happy about the Conservatives breaking their promises on VAT on fuel". They have yet to be convinced by Labour. "Tony Blair is not saying much about his policies."

What you've got to worry about is not high or low levels of refusal, but the reasons for it – "I've got the tea on", or "I'm looking after the kids", he says.

He is satisfied that the adjustments he makes to the samples he gets take into account the "shy Tory" factor.

But then, if the Tories took polling evidence seriously, they would have given up long ago, managing director of ICM, the polling company which does the Tory party's own surveys and consistently produces the lowest Labour figures.

What then of the 40 per cent who will not take part in the first place? Surely there is an army of hidden Tories lurking there? Not according to Nick Sparrow,

Polls fail to locate the hidden army of Conservative voters

John Rentoul

Tory hopes that the quarter of the electorate who are "don't know" are the seventh cavalry poised to come charging over the hill to their rescue are not founded on any opinion polling evidence.

It is true that a large proportion of the electorate refuses to take part in opinion polls. In face-to-face surveys, this is hard to quantify, because people cross the street, or do not answer the door.

In telephone surveys, the refusal rate is about 40 per cent.

Of those who do agree to take part, up to a further 40 per cent initially refuse to say how they will vote, replying "don't know", "won't vote" or "won't say". But, when pressed ("Which party are you most inclined to vote for?"), this falls to 23 per cent.

Unlike the last election, however, none of the pollsters except MORI take "don't know/won't say" at face value. Harris, for *The Independent*, finds that most of them will still say how they voted at the last general election, and assumes that those who say they voted Conservative last time will do so again this time.

In last Friday's poll, this increased the Tory share of the vote by three points and reduced Labour's by two – and cut the refusals to 16 per cent.

This is a rough-and-ready adjustment, because some of the Tories – those who were too young to vote last time, or who say they did not vote or who cannot remember.

What then of the 40 per cent who will not take part in the first place? Surely there is an army of hidden Tories lurking there? Not according to Nick Sparrow,

Major is least charismatic world leader

Glenda Cooper
Social Affairs Correspondent

It's official – John Major is grey. The Prime Minister has been rated the least charismatic leader in the world – even less dynamic than Prince Charles or Dan Quayle, the British Psychological Society was told yesterday.

And despite politicians' pleas that this general election should be based on substance rather than style, it appears that the latter is what the British public wants, rating charisma and honesty above competence.

In a survey of nearly 700 people in Britain, the United States and Canada about their reactions to national and international politicians as well as public figures, the singer Madonna and Baroness Thatcher came across as the strongest personalities.

The researchers told the society's annual conference in Edinburgh that personality was increasingly important in how voters made up their minds.

The survey, carried out in late 1993, asked students in the three countries which of a list of 40 characteristics they associated with domestic leaders, world leaders and public figures. These 40 traits were arranged into four groups – charisma, integrity, competence and strength.

Asked to rate which quality was the most important all three countries named integrity as most essential. But whereas Canadians wanted to their politicians to be competent, the British valued charisma more. The US rated both equally.

Looking at their own political figures, the British said Lady Thatcher was more charismatic

than Mr Major and the late Labour leader John Smith more competent and stronger than either – but also less honest, according to Mark Pancer, Professor of Psychology at Wilfrid Laurier University, Ontario.

He added that the researchers had also asked the participants to rate how warmly they felt towards a politician, where a score of 50 to 100 was favourable and below 50 feelings became cooler. The British were not keen on any of the politicians. Mr Smith did best, with 44, while Lady Thatcher was the least favoured on 36.

Baroness Thatcher, the Russian leader, scored 49 and Bill Clinton, the US president, 46.

On the charisma index, Mr Major scored 2.31 – lower than all the Canadians and Prince Charles on 2.67 and Dan Quayle on 2.83. Globally, Mr Clinton was seen as most charismatic and also did well on integrity. In no country was strength in a politician judged particularly positively, Professor Pancer said, suggesting that the aggression typified by Lady Thatcher's premiership had changed in favour of consensus politics.

He said that the results showed that personality was playing an ever-more important role and the message for today's leaders was to stress their own integrity. Personality traits were easier to grasp than complex policies and the way sleaze had dominated this general election campaign proved that, he said.

"Sleaze and smears are still dominant in the news," he said. "Sleaze is a sign that personalities are influencing people more than before."

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election '97

Thatcher joins Major in rallying cry

Show of unity as former PM tells party workers to go for Labour's 'jugal'

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

Baroness Thatcher swept away any lingering fears that she may come out in favour of Tony Blair and joined John Major yesterday in telling Tory candidates to go for Labour's "jugal" to end socialism for good in this country.

The show of unity by Lady Thatcher and her successor, who posed for the photographers on the doorstep of Tory Central Office, gave the candidates a morale-boosting send-off for the election campaign.

According to one candidate there: "Major said over the last 18 years, we have seen socialism withering. He told us, 'We have got them by the throat. Just one last bit of pressure by the throat, and socialism will die'."

Mr Major said the Labour manifesto had taken three years to write, but had come apart in only three days on the campaign hustings. "They've had 18 years to work out their policies. Now Labour have told us their manifesto was scribbled down in a garden in Islington," he said.

"I thought that was a gimmick. It's obviously true. There is now emerging a question of competence. Is Labour fit to govern? As soon as the pressure rises and the spotlight goes on, the cracks begin to show. How long before the dam of Labour's credibility shatters and bursts?"

Lady Thatcher focused her attack on Labour's proposal to accept the European Social Charter, giving more protection to workers, and claimed Mr Blair would give in to demands for negotiating rights by the trade union "bully boys".

She said: "In the next three months the destiny of our country will be set for a decade or longer because of the inter-governmental conference in Amsterdam. They will try to take



United stand: John Major and the party chairman, Dr Brian Mawhinney, waving off Baroness Thatcher after her rallying call to candidates at Conservative Central Office yesterday. Photograph: Emma Boam

away the veto, that is why we must see our Prime Minister John Major and our government returned at this election, so that there can be no diminishing power of the nation state."

Before their display of unity,

Mr Major "came out" yesterday and declared in a Sunday newspaper he was a "One Nation Conservative" - there's no point in hiding where I stand in the Conservative Party; that's where I stand. But Lady Thatcher,

who once dismissed the idea as "no-nation Conservatism", did not let that spoil her visit to Central Office to address the troops - more than 100 party candidates and workers. Nor did Baroness Thatcher mention the

speculation that she had privately said Mr Blair would not let Britain down. She praised Mr Major's "magnificent stewardship of the last six years".

She said: "It is thanks to him and the Conservative govern-

ment that we have such a high level of prosperity and a high reputation in the world. I am here to support him."

She added: "I would ask every one of you to ask every candidate from every other party

the following question: 'Are you seeking election for Parliament in order to hand over the powers of Parliament to a non-elected bureaucracy in Brussels?' And in a reference to her remarks in the House of Com-

mons which led to the resignation of Lord Howe as her Foreign Secretary, she added: "I know what every Conservative will answer to that, and it is in a well-known quote - 'No, no, no.'"

Vintage stuff lifts candidates' spirits

Colin Brown

Neil Hamilton and Piers Merchant were conspicuous by their absence. But Tim Yeo and Alan Clarke were at Tory Central Office to hear a vintage rallying call by Baroness Thatcher to unite behind John Major for the general election campaign.

Sir Marcus Fox, chairman of the 1992 Committee, said: "She was on absolutely top form. The wonderful atmosphere that was created, quite truthfully, was because she is now going to give everything that she can to us winning. Her supporting John Major was 100 per cent."

Many emerged from the private meeting for the Tory candidates saying their tails were now up after Labour's set-backs over Scottish devolution, privatisation and the unions.

Gerald Howarth, the

Thatcherite Tory candidate for Aldershot, said: "It was vintage stuff. The message here is that, united between Margaret Thatcher and John Major, the Tory party can preserve for the British people the prosperity which we have delivered. We have seen the deceit over Scotland, and the unions. Labour have had a lousy week, and our tails are up. There was a fantastic video to begin with."

The video, also screened before the party's rally at the Royal Albert Hall, suggests Tony Blair is surrounded by unreconstructed socialists in the Shadow Cabinet.

Sir Rhodes Boyson, a Thatcherite MP, denied Lady Thatcher was still overshadowing Mr Major's leadership by her presence at the candidates' rally. "I don't think so. We all welcomed her and we welcomed the

Prime Minister. There is no doubt - at the present time - they have a very good relationship."

Julian Brazier, Tory candidate for Canterbury, said: "There were two very good speeches. The most important thing that came through was the sheer scale of the restoration of trade union power, and it will be irreversible. That is the point that the Prime Minister and Margaret Thatcher made very strongly, that sign up for the social chapter, and on a majority vote, we can lose all the progress we have made in taming the trade unions, overnight."

But the campaign has marked the point where Mr Major has staked out his credentials as a "One Nation" Tory and not a Thatcherite. That may dismay the right wing, but Tory strategists believe it is crucial part of the campaign.

Stephen Goodwin

Scotland's three Cabinet ministers yesterday sought to revive the party's fortunes north of the border with a defence of the Union and a blistering attack on their political opponents.

The people of Scotland were facing an unprecedented three-pronged attack on their "livelihoods, their prosperity and their British birthright", Michael Forsyth, the Secretary of State for Scotland told a rally of Tory candidates in Glasgow. "At no general election this century has there been so much at risk for Scots."

However, with weekend polls showing Labour's support holding firm at almost 50 per cent, and one even suggesting the Tories could lose Eastwood, their safest seat in Scotland, the greatest risk continues to be to

the survival of the Conservative Party itself in Scotland. All three of the Cabinet ministers at the rally, Mr Forsyth, Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, and Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, are on the endangered list, a fact which may in part explain the ferocity of their language.

Tony Blair, the Labour leader, was described as a blusterer and "bletherer" out of touch with Scottish colleagues: the Liberal Democrats as "Labour's dog-walkers" lust-

Ministers attack 'extreme left-wing nationalist' SNP

ing to tax and spend; and the Scottish Nationalist Party as "extreme left-wing nationalists" which supported devolution as a fast-track to dismemberment of the United Kingdom.

Mr Rifkind said Labour would crush Britain between "the hammer of a fragmented, devolved Britain and the anvil of an ever-centralising European Union".

Mr Forsyth insisted the tartan tax was on its way for Scotland under Labour despite Mr Blair's "implausible blustering" in Glasgow last Friday. "It represents the undemocratic and unjust principle of discriminatory rates of income tax within the UK - a dangerously separatist concept. Mr Forsyth dismissed the 129 members of the planned Scottish parliament as Mr Blair's "parishioners" but he at least agreed with the Labour leader that power would remain at Westminster.

"Scotland has a place at Westminster and Scotland will

not give up its strong voice in return for a parish council that will impoverish our people," he said, winning a standing ovation from the candidates.

Some of the heaviest fire was directed at the Scottish Nationalists who will launch their manifesto today. Mr Forsyth said that far from the budget surplus predicted for Scotland by the SNP in "back-of-the-envelope" calculations, a separatist government would inherit a deficit of at least £6.4bn even with North Sea oil revenues.

"The terrifying fact is that Alex Salmond and his extreme left-wing nationalists are the ultimate beneficiaries of Labour's reckless devolution scheme which would end in the dissolution of the United Kingdom."

Mr Salmond dismissed Mr Forsyth's attacks, claiming the Scottish Secretary was "lashing out in all directions" as the Tories headed towards defeat.

The Liberal Democrats produced a paper by Jim Stevens of Strathclyde University's economics department claiming the cost of separation and the SNP's fiscal measures would be an increase of 22.3p on the standard rate.

More wounding for Mr Salmond was an attack on his "dull" leadership style by a party supporter on a radio phone-in. Paul Rosano from Edinburgh asked why he was "so unpassionate, unconvincing and uncharismatic".

"That's just me," Mr Salmond replied, adding that it was important to put a case for independence in a thoroughly professional way.

By contrast, the profile of the Labour candidate, Christopher Fegan, a county and district councillor, has so far been so low as to be virtually invisible.

But don't wait up. The count will be late and the result is not expected until 11pm on the day after the election.

Toni Carver
St Ives Times and Echo

AROUND THE REGIONS

Stormy waters in Cornish marginal seat

The St Ives constituency, covering the tip of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, became a marginal seat in the 1992 general election when its Tory MP, David Harris, saw his majority slashed from 25,147 to 1,645. Mr Harris was nearly overtaken by the Liberal Democrat candidate, Andrew George, a local man from Hayle. And it seems nothing can stop Mr George finishing the job this time.

Mr Harris said that he was standing down at this election and was replaced as the Tory candidate by William Rogers, an insurance broker from Penzance. Mr Harris then changed his mind, but it was too late. He is now trying to get selected for

any last-minute vacancies that may be created in Tory seats.

So the Tories will fight the election without the advantage of the "incumbency factor" which any sitting MP enjoys and which is usually thought to be worth 1,000 votes.

What is more, since 1992, the economic problems in the constituency have gone from bad to dire. West Cornwall remains one of the most economically

deprived areas in the United Kingdom with little evidence of any upturn so far.

Above all, the fishing industry has been badly hit, fuelling anti-European sentiment which has split the Tories locally. The entire fishing industry seems to have defected to the Referendum Party, which demands a referendum on the terms of Britain's membership of the European Union. Tomorrow,



more than over fishing boats plan to fly the flag to welcome the party's leader, Sir James Goldsmith, when he visits the fishing port of Newlyn.

Harry Storer, a former Tory

councillor who now sits as an Independent, says he will be voting for the Referendum Party, whose candidate is a local boat-owner and fisherman. "I quit the Tories because of the way

they have treated small businesses. By escalating business rates and encouraging out-of-town supermarkets they have absolutely crucified the very people who put them in power," he said.

The outgoing MP admits that his inability to persuade ministers to outlaw flags of convenience before Spain joined the EU was a serious failure. "If only we had acted then,

we would not have had this dreadful business of quota hoppers," Mr Harris said last week.

And the Tory disarray on the issue has forced the new candidate to strike an anti-European note, saying he "has never made any secret of the fact that he is totally opposed to political union".

Finally, the Tories face the prospect of Labour supporters voting tactically. Labour won

only 16 per cent of the vote in 1992 and the tactical voting campaign run by Bruce Kent, a former Labour candidate, is backing Mr George, who has effectively been fighting this election for the last five years. He has maintained a high profile and the Liberal Democrats already control County Hall.

By contrast, the profile of the Labour candidate, Christopher Fegan, a county and district councillor, has so far been so low as to be virtually invisible.

But don't wait up. The count will be late and the result is not expected until 11pm on the day after the election.

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Klondike! Diamond find puts glitter into Ireland

Alan Murdoch
Dublin

The sleepy valleys of Donegal used to nothing louder than the sound of fly fishermen casting lines could soon face a rush of Klondike proportions following a British company's announcement that important diamond reserves may exist there.

Cambridge Mineral Resources, based in Thetford, Norfolk, confirmed that it has located minerals closely associated with diamond and sapphire deposits near Malin Head in Donegal's Inishowen peninsula. Suggestions that Europe's answer to Kimberley - South Africa's diamond-mining centre - may lie beneath their feet have created a stir among Donegal residents amid hopes of new prosperity. But some fear environmental damage in an unspoiled region with significant tourism potential.

The peninsula - population 30,000 - is one of the poorest parts of Ireland, dependent for employment on sheep farming, some fishing at the north end where the port of Greencastle is home to Ireland's fishing school. Inishowen suffers from being cut off by the border from its natural capital, Derry city. Its

airport would be the main access route for overseas visitors.

Securing suitable mining labour should be easy. Traditionally many locals have left for work in Scotland and England. Emigrants from west Donegal and neighbouring Mayo have long provided "tunnel rats" to build motorways, drainage schemes and the Channel tunnel.

Locally, clothing giant Fruit of the Loom has a large factory in Bunacraon on Inishowen's west side with a predominantly female workforce. Its satellite plant near Malin Head, in the main prospecting area, employs another 100 workers.

Bernard McGuinness, a publican and Donegal councillor from nearby Culdaff, said: "There is certainly a need for male employment. But I would be very concerned about our landscape. Inishowen is moving dramatically towards tourism, though we don't want to become neon-signed tourism like Killarney. Donegal is unique in that it is not commercialised tourism; it is one of the unspoiled beauty spots. People are becoming more conscious of that."

Last year, Inishowen secured Ireland's only European Union blue flag beach award. He is suspicious that Cam-



Threatened idyll: Lough Swilly in Co Donegal, where residents fear a Klondike-style rush after learning that diamond reserves may exist there. Photograph: Gerry Sweeney/Impact

bridge has generated media coverage before local representatives were advised about mine plans. He says he would be unhappy at the mining firm's lack of consultation with local communities and would fear any open-cast methods that created large waste tips.

Mr McGuinness also fears that the embryonic Inishowen angling co-operative's plan to draw tourists to the noted salmon and sea trout fishing waters of the Crana, Culdaff and Oweakill rivers could also be undermined by the impact of Cambridge's excavation. "Anything that threatened

that would not be tolerated. As far as I'm concerned there are more jobs in that than there would be in mining," he said.

Local Fianna Fail TD (MP) Cecilia Keaveney, who lives in Moville also on the peninsula's eastern coast, foresees interest, especially from men, in mining jobs. But she agrees tourism offers stronger long-term employment prospects.

"The potential for tourism is massive. But after the ceasefire broke down last year 49 per cent of businesses here felt they had had a poor year in tourism. So in that way we are gasping for any support we can get," she

said. "Diamonds, obviously, are a girl's best friend, so let's face it, nobody will say no if they can be extracted at reasonable cost, not only to the people but to the environment. Then it would be welcomed."

International excitement sparked by first hints of the gem-bearing minerals two years ago meant that all 180-odd Irish prospecting licences available were quickly snapped up, mainly by Canadian interests.

Cambridge's chairman, Bob Young, said early Inishowen test results were "absolutely astonishing" in highlighting kimberlitic and lamproitic rocks at all

sample locations. These minerals, consistent with diamond and sapphire finds, were also present in Scottish sites where what he claimed "world-class" sapphires were discovered.

Electro-magnetic panning had demonstrated the same minerals were abundant in Inishowen. Small blue sapphires were found at one Donegal location, the company said.

It cites a 1995 study by the Geological Survey of Britain which indicated that areas in Ireland and Scotland contained basement rock of sufficient age and depth "to fit within the known window for diamond

formation". Cambridge Mineral Resources is also prospecting in Sweden for diamonds and in Spain for emeralds.

Mr Young also predicted that if diamonds were found in commercial quantities it could generate substantial ancillary work, such as gem-cutting.

Following questions on the effect of mining on an area of outstanding beauty heavily reliant on tourism, Mr Young said site studies had not indicated the presence of chemicals such as uranium likely to result in harmful leakages. Separate plans to extract uranium in Donegal in the 1970s were

abandoned amid widespread opposition.

Recent attempts to start gold mining in neighbouring Co Mayo met strong opposition amid fears that dangerous chemicals used in extracting metals could seep into the water table.

Cambridge's chief executive, David Bramhill, said his firm may shortly commission an environmental impact study to allay any local fears over the type of mining proposed.

However, local residents point out that this would hardly amount to a concession as it would be obligatory anyway.

Explosion threat brings shuttle crew down to earth

Nasa chiefs curtail 16-day space mission

Rupert Cornwell
Washington

Mission control at the US space agency, Nasa, yesterday cut short the 16-day flight of the space shuttle *Columbia* because of a defective fuel cell and ordered it to return to earth today. It is only the third time in 17 years of shuttle history that a mission has been so curtailed.

After a day of discussions, and vain hopes that the problem with one of the three power generators aboard the craft would resolve itself, officials decided *Columbia* should land at the Kennedy Space centre in Florida at 2.34 pm local time today - after just four days in space.

Nasa officials insist that the other two fuel cells are working normally and that the craft and its five-man, two-woman crew are in no danger.

But scientists warn that if the faulty unit was permitted to deteriorate much longer, the risk would increase that the supercold liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen which combine to produce electricity, could overheat and cause a deadly explosion.

The recall means that most of the scientific experiments scheduled for the next fortnight, aimed at using weightlessness to study various physical processes, will be scrapped.

They included the lighting of controlled fires to study the impact on flames of zero gravity, and the behaviour of protein crystals used in medical research.

"We're certainly disappointed," said *Columbia*'s commander, Jim Halsell, after being told that he and his colleagues would

be returning home prematurely.

According to Nasa officials, most of the weakening of the suspect unit occurred during the first 18 hours of the flight.

On Saturday, the unit's condition seemed to stabilise, but even so flight controllers were taking no chances. Nasa's operating procedures require that all three fuel cells on a shuttle must be working properly.

"We have flight rules that are very conservative," said an official at Nasa headquarters in Houston, Texas. "A general explosion would be catastrophic."

The power to conduct the planned experiments aboard *Columbia* comes from three electricity generating units in the shuttle fuselage, just below the payload bay, where this time a laboratory had been set up for the experiments. The units also provide drinking water for the crew.

Each of them comprises 96 cells arranged in three 32-cell "substacks". Performance is monitored by comparing output of 16 cells in each substack.

Almost immediately after lift off on Friday, engineers noticed lower than expected power from one of the substacks in unit No 2. Even so, just two functioning cells are plenty for normal re-entry into the atmosphere and subsequent landing.

The last time a shuttle mission ended early was in 1991, due to a failed navigational device. In 1981, in only the second flight of the shuttle programme, a defective fuel cell aboard the same craft *Columbia* caused its mission to be aborted.

These mishaps, however, pale beside the disaster which still haunts Nasa, the explosion of *Challenger* just 76 seconds after lift-off on 28 January, 1986.



Branching out: The space shuttle *Columbia* lifts off last Friday. Photograph: Reuters

Why 2000 may come too soon for Greenwich

Louise Jury

Greenwich has got the time wrong. The Royal Observatory, home to the line from which world time is measured, claimed Saturday as the 1,000th day to the dawn of a new millennium.

But its Millennium Countdown Clock in south-east London - part of a scheme to sell sponsorship of the days - has been launched 24 hours too soon, according to Christian Aid who unveiled their rival timepiece at Finsbury Circus in central London yesterday.

"If you're counting the days we're the ones who are absolutely right," Christian Aid spokesman Andrew Simms insisted. Midday Saturday was actually 1,000 days and 12 hours, he said. Moreover, although no one was available from Greenwich to comment, Mr Simms claimed that at least one of its experts had agreed.

The French, too, Jean Tiberi, the mayor of Paris, began the 1,000 day countdown at midnight on Saturday by flicking the switch for a giant digital clock installed on the Eiffel Tower and flashing "J-1000".

When it was pointed out that the British had inaugurated their clock the day before, M. Tiberi said he did not want to enter into a competition. "You could say today, yesterday, the day before," he said. "But I think the symbol is stronger tonight."

Christian Aid and fellow

charity Jubilee 2000 were also keen to stress something more important than a few hours. They plan to use their neon sign, donated by the site-owners Land Securities, to flash up appeals for a one-off slashing of £3.4bn of Third World debts.

"Cancelling debt is the biggest challenge facing leaders of the rich countries in the 1,000 days left to the millennium," said Ann Pettifor of Jubilee 2000, which was named because a jubilee was historically a time to write off debts.

The charities believe 67 million drivers, 367 million bus passengers and 85 million people using the underground station will see the Jubilee 2000 Millennium Countdown Clock by the landmark date.

Except, of course, that every-one yesterday was speaking as if the millennium started on 1 January in 2,000.

Officially, it does not, as the Royal Greenwich Observatory had previously pointed out. "The start of the new millennium is 1 January 2001 and not the year 2000," a spokesman said last year. "This does not mean we should not celebrate the start of the 2,000th year, but we should get the nomenclature right."

But that was before they had a clock on the wall of the Old Royal Observatory and companies happy to cash in on the commercialisation of time.

The Paris clock, page 13



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Netanyahu talks as Israel drifts towards war

Hopes to salvage peace process rest on PM's visit to Washington

Eric Silver
Jerusalem

Israel's right-wing Likud Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, left a deeply troubled nation behind him when he flew to the United States yesterday for separate talks with President Bill Clinton and King Hussein of Jordan designed to salvage the Middle East peace.

Although he was publicly defying international pressure to freeze Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank, ordinary Israelis feared that his take-it-or-leave-it treatment of the Palestinians was putting the Oslo process in jeopardy. Clashes persisted on the West Bank at the weekend between stone-throwing Arab youths and Israeli soldiers.

"Many Israelis are worried that we are drifting towards war," a leading pollster, Dr Mina Zemach, told *The Independent*. A Tel-Aviv University survey published last week found

59 per cent of Israelis rating the chances of war "very high" and 74 per cent afraid that they or their families might be killed or maimed by terrorist attacks.

In advance of his American trip, Mr Netanyahu tried to turn the focus on the Palestinian leadership's alleged "green light" for suicide bombings like that which killed three women in a Tel Aviv café on 21 March. He has consistently refused to commit Israel to any quid pro quo, though US and European mediators are convinced that he will have to give the Palestinians something. One of the Prime Minister's senior aides, Danny Naveh, said on Saturday that stopping construction on East Jerusalem's Har Homa site was "not on the agenda".

Addressing a Likud audience last Thursday, Mr Netanyahu warned the Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, that if he did not rein in the men of violence, Israel would turn to "other, non-diplomatic alternatives". He is reported to have ordered the



Flames of protest: Palestinians passing burning tyres yesterday near the entrance to Aida refugee camp on the outskirts of Bethlehem

Photograph: Rula Halawani/Reuters

army to prepare to invade towns now under Palestinian self-rule if the worst comes to the worst. Uzi Benziman, a columnist in the daily *Ha'aretz*, predicted

yesterday that sending in the troops would be interpreted by the Muslim world as an act of war. "Has Israeli society really decided that this is what it

wants?" Mr Benziman asked. "Has it decided to go to war; and pay the price in blood, because of a quarrel with the Palestinian Authority over a new neigh-

bourhood in Jerusalem, or about the scope of the next phase of redeployment?" The answer, according to Dr Zemach, seems to be no. "Most

of the public (about 60 per cent) want the peace process to continue, even though only 30 per cent feel sure that Yasser Arafat really wants peace," the pollster said. "They believe we are strong enough, and they are ready to pay the price."

An unprecedented 43 per cent were prepared to yield part of Jerusalem to Palestinian autonomy, though opinion was evenly divided over Har Homa.

Thousands of Israelis demonstrated against Mr Netanyahu's policies on Saturday in Tel Aviv's Yitzhak Rabin Square. Recalling Mr Netanyahu's promise of "peace with security", the Labour opposition leader, Shimon Peres, told them: "The peace looks weak and security has been undermined."

The Prime Minister is being widely criticised for lurching from crisis to crisis in a doomed quest to keep his Arab partners and his expansionist constituency happy at the same time. He hoped, for instance, to appease the right, disenchanted by the Hebron redeployment in January, by sending the bulldozers on to Har Homa in February. "He gets up, licks his finger and tests which way the wind is blowing," said Yaron Ezrahi, a Hebrew University political scientist. "The contradiction is inherent in his mandate. He was elected to continue the peace process and to build settlements, but you cannot implement Oslo and Har Homa simultaneously."

Letters, page 18

Clinton sees his credibility on the line

Rupert Cornwell
Washington

The visit of the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, to the White House today offers not merely an eleventh-hour chance of halting the collapse of the "peace process". It also gives President Bill Clinton perhaps his last opportunity to preserve his and America's credibility as even-handed brokers of a settlement.

For much of his first term, Mr Clinton had little short of a charmed life with the Middle East. The former secretary of state Warren Christopher might be criticised, but he himself could savour moments like the 1993 "handshake summit" between Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin, the Israel-Jordan treaty, even the recent Hebron agreement, prematurely hailed by the Administration as a major triumph that would pave the way to peace.

Mr Clinton risked no significant political capital and, notwithstanding the arrival in power of the hardline Mr Netanyahu, he could claim the Middle East as a foreign-policy success in the 1996 election campaign, proof of America's role as the "indispensable nation" in global affairs.

But the crisis has moved beyond even Mr Clinton's ability to charm, blur differences and buy time. This time blunt talking is required, to Mr Netanyahu in particular. The Administration's refusal to put public pressure on Israel has convinced Arabs that Washington will invariably side with

Israel, to which the US response is that sensitive Middle East diplomacy is more effectively conducted in the Oval Office than by the UN.

But the storm over the Har Homa settlement in Jerusalem has eliminated all wiggle room. Through the Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, the US has signalled its displeasure at "thickening" of settlements, but on the eve of the Prime Minister's departure, his Cabinet Secretary, Danny Naveh, said construction "will continue."

US officials claimed to have "new ideas" to nudge the process, which Mr Clinton would put to Mr Netanyahu in the Oval Office, and to Mr Arafat by phone. But they provided no details.

Mr Netanyahu's proposal to leapfrog step-by-step implementation of the Oslo accords and go for a comprehensive settlement within six months, tackling the toughest issues of all, like borders and the status of Jerusalem, is regarded with mixed feelings here. Officially, Washington calls the idea "premature", especially the idea of a marathon head-to-head session similar to the 1978 Camp David meeting that led to the Israeli-Egyptian treaty.

But even US officials wonder whether Mr Netanyahu's strategy now is not to humiliate the Palestinians with *faits accomplis* like Har Homa, even if they goad the Palestinians into acts of violence. A resurgence of terrorism would let Mr Netanyahu blame them for the collapse of a "peace process" he has disliked from the outset.

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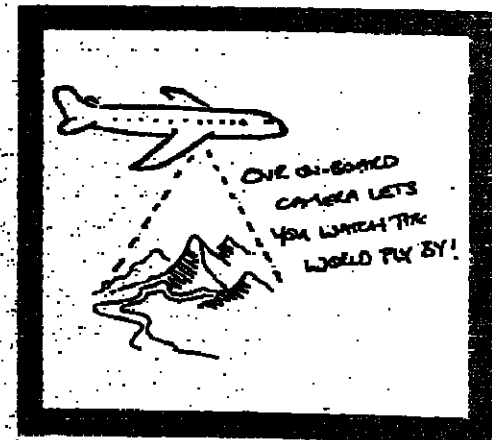
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09/21/2015

Single currency back on track for 1999 start

Sarah Hahn Noordwijk

After months of buffeting, the European single currency is back on course and is heading for a January 1999 launch as planned.

This was the overwhelming message from the informal weekend meeting of European finance ministers meeting in the Dutch coastal resort of Noordwijk.

The 15 finance ministers, as always, had a vested interest in propagating such a message, given the enormous political stakes their governments have in the project. However, on this occasion, their statements coincided with renewed signs of economic optimism within key member states. Signs have emerged of recovery in Germany's industrial output and in French growth.

Buoyancy has also been re-established by the decision of Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, to stand again for election in 1998 - a move which has been viewed in the markets as a clear sign that the Chancellor is determined to see his project through.

Political statements in Noordwijk were also underpinned by a further round of key decisions on how the single currency will come into being, including an outline decision on the

timetable in the 1998 run-up, and endorsement of the stability pact to keep countries in line after the launch.

Most significant was the agreement that a special EU council, to decide which countries meet the economic criteria for joining EMU, will be held in May 1998, eight months before the launch on 1 January 1999. Rulings will be based on economic figures for this year.

Agreement on the timing for these crucial rulings under-

Nevertheless, Britain will host the informal finance ministers meeting in April 1998, when final plans for the special council will be laid. Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, said at the weekend that the informal finance ministers' meeting was likely to be held in York.

Had European Union governments been seriously contemplating delaying the launch of EMU, most observers believe there would, by now, be signs of preparations under way.

European finance ministers meeting, despite the election campaign, stoutly tried to maintain the government position that the launch of EMU on 1 January 1999 "is unlikely".

Whether the launch does go ahead on time now depends on whether enough countries manage to meet the economic convergence criteria, and that will become clearer by the summer.

France, however, is already saying it is now confident and Theo Waigel, the German finance minister, said at the weekend he was sure Germany could bring its public deficit down to 2.9 per cent of gross domestic product this year - under the 3 per cent ceiling. There have been growing signs in recent weeks that member states will be prepared to massage figures if necessary to come into line.

The clearest sign yet of German political determination to see the single currency plan launched on time came at Noordwijk when Mr Waigel indicated he would prepared to countenance a flexible interpretation of the entry conditions if Bonn is unable to bring its deficit down to 3 per cent of GDP by the end of this year.

"I have never nailed myself to the cross of 3 per cent," he told reporters. "When I said last year that '3 per cent is 3 per cent' I did not say that 3 point nought per cent is 3 per cent."

After June 1998, the costs of turning back would become higher than the risks of carrying on

scores just how little time a British government will have to decide whether to join at the launch. The special council, to be attended by all EU heads of state, will take place under the six-month British presidency of the EU, which starts in January 1998.

However, it was confirmed at the weekend that the council will take place in Brussels, not in Britain, thereby avoiding embarrassment for a British Government which might, by then, have decided to "opt out".

The last time the EU could possibly manage a delay without massive disruption, would be at the Amsterdam summit in June, say analysts. Beyond June, the costs of turning back - in terms of political damage, and market chaos - would become more prohibitive than the risks of carrying on, whatever the doubts.

Even Mr Clarke, however, had to admit on Saturday that this was not the case. The Chancellor, keen to attend what could well have been his last Eu-

Judge halts media mogul's trip

Elizabeth Nash Madrid

A senior judge has warned Jesus de Polanco, chairman of the Spanish media empire Prisa, that he is shortly to be summoned to answer allegations of fraud in the group's television company, Canal Plus. Prisa says it is being harassed by government sympathisers seeking to punish the group for its ties to the former ruling Socialists.

Judge Javier Gomez de Liano on Friday refused permission for Mr Polanco to travel to the United States later this month to accept an honorary doctorate at Brown University. The judge said he would be demanding Mr

Polanco's appearance in court at that time. Prisa condemned the ruling as "intolerable and gratuitous".

Prisa Group, which owns Spain's leading newspaper *El Pais* and has a shareholding in *The Independent*, launched its successful pay-per-view television operation jointly with Canal Plus of France and a clutch of Spanish banks in 1989. In January, the venture was relaunched as Sogecable, to include a new digital satellite channel.

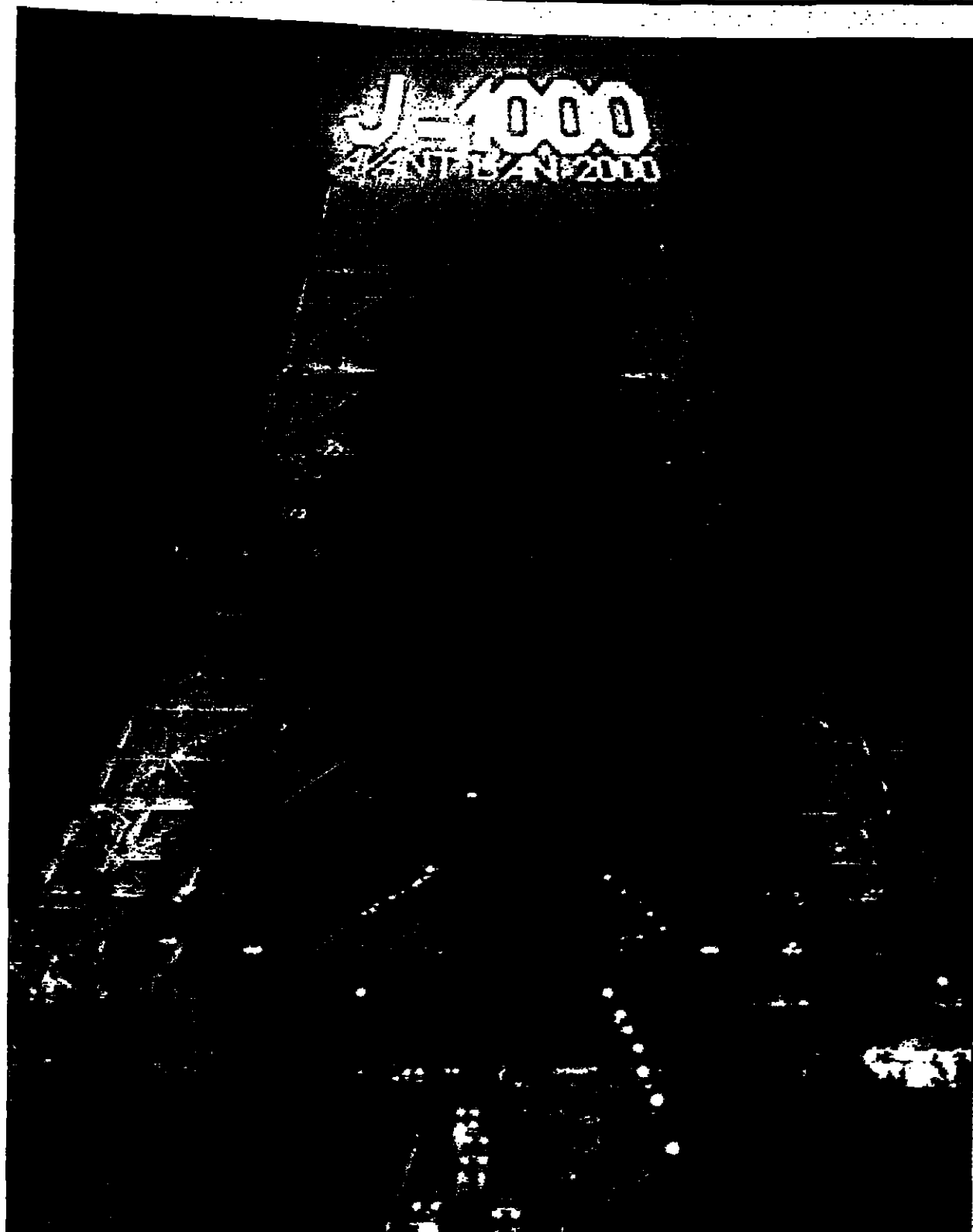
Within weeks, a law professor sued Mr Polanco and the Canal Plus board, accusing them of misappropriating 23bn pesetas (£115m) paid in the early 1990s by subscribers as

deposits for decoders. The professor, Francisco Javier Sainz Moreno, said Canal Plus invested the deposits instead of keeping them in a special account. He also accuses Mr Polanco and his fellow directors of defrauding subscribers of VAT benefits conceded by the former Socialist government.

While investigating the suit, the judge told Mr Polanco he could not leave the country without asking permission. When Mr Polanco asked, permission was refused. Advance warning of Mr Sainz Moreno's complaints were given ample coverage in publications belonging to Prisa's rivals.

Prisa believes government sympathisers are piling on the pressure following a surprise agreement last Christmas between Canal Plus and the other main private channel, Antena Tres, over rights to football key to the success of digital television in Spain.

The deal dashed the government's hopes of launching its own digital operation, in co-operation with the Mexican media giant Televisa. Ministers dispatched to parliament a bill enabling the government to restrict broadcasts of major sports events by digital pay-TV programmers. Prisa condemned the measure, but the government said it was defending the public interest.



Counting the days: A giant clock lighting up the Eiffel Tower in the centre of Paris on Saturday night as France started its countdown to the next millennium

Photograph: Jean-Christophe Kahn/Reuters

US in Okinawa minefield

Richard Lloyd Parry Tokyo

As recently as 11 months ago, Japan represented little more than a rest-stop on the itineraries of US defence secretaries. In the Philippines, the Navy had been ordered out of its Subic Bay base; in South Korea, GIs are occasionally beaten up by locals. The Japanese, though, were benevolent hosts: unpleasant incidents were few, and the government contributed a handsome sum to the maintenance of 45,000 troops.

This morning William Cohen arrives for his first visit as Defence Secretary in a very different country. Everything changed in September 1995, when a girl in Okinawa was raped by three US servicemen. The crime, and what was seen as the Americans' lackadaisical response, ignited resentment of the US presence on the land and throughout the country.

Mr Cohen's visit comes at a delicate time for the US military in Japan and for Tokyo, attempts to accommodate them to the satisfaction of its own people. The bases are maintained by the Japanese government as part of its

obligations under the US-Japan Security Treaty, the keystone of America's Asian security policy. Three-quarters of them are on Okinawa: the barracks, ports and airfields take up a fifth of the area of the island.

Some 32,000 landowners gave over property, most of them willingly, for rent. But 3,000 of them refuse to co-operate. For years this made no difference: the island's governor signed an order forcing their compulsory use. But after the 1995 rape and the demonstrations it provoked, he refused.

On 14 May the leases expire on 3,000 of these plots. Many are tiny but they occupy crucial positions. The Japanese government has embarked on bureaucratic measures to regain control of the land but they are glacially slow. In the meantime, it faces a choice of changing the rules fast or putting its allies in the embarrassing position of being in illegal occupation of their own bases.

The Prime Minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto, chose the first option and the amendment was approved by his Cabinet last week. Mr Cohen's visit, and a trip to Washington by Mr Hashimoto later this month,

were seen as the seal on the Japanese government's decision to force the Okinawans to accept the presence of the US bases.

Economic help is in the offing for the Okinawans and the two sides have agreed to relocate a heliport on an offshore platform, reducing the area occupied by the bases. But the number of troops in Okinawa will remain more or less the same. As even Yukio Okamoto, Mr Hashimoto's special adviser on Okinawa, admitted, "It's the equivalent of pulling a nail out of Okinawa's chest, and driving it back into its stomach."

Local opinion has been appeased only partially by these measures, and the fragility of the

situation has been emphasised in the past few months. Last year a US plane accidentally ditched a live missile in the sea, and Okinawan opinion was inflamed when it emerged that uranium-tipped rounds had been used in firing exercises, in violation of local rules.

Last week, just as memories of the Okinawa rape were beginning to fade, a US sailor stationed near Tokyo was reported to have raped a Japanese. For a few hours there was a sense of *doga vu*. When it emerged the man had broken his girlfriend's collarbone rather than rape her, in Washington and Tokyo you could almost hear the sighs of relief.



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Hong Kong 香港 handover

Mandarin class squares up for territorial fight

Stephen Vines
Hong Kong

The battle for Hong Kong is under way. It is yet to emerge in the full light of day but the intense in-fighting within the Chinese bureaucracy for control of its newly acquired piece of territory occasionally spills into the public arena.

The most up-front combatant is the Hong Kong branch of the New China News Agency, or Xinhua, which is desperate to retain its previous predominance in Hong Kong affairs. Zhang Junsheng, Xinhua's spokesman, has even taken the unusual step of publicly insisting that his organisation's role will not change following the handover of power in July.

Less publicly, Xinhua sources have been putting it about that they will retain control of the territory's all-important Communist Party organisation.

However, there is every indication that Xinhua's star is no longer in the ascendancy. Zhou Nan, the unprepossessing agency director in Hong Kong, who is said to have perfected his English while interrogating prisoners of war during the Korean conflict, appears to have made a number of serious tactical misjudgments.

Mr Zhou and his lieutenants were known to have been lukewarm in their support for the campaign to install Tung Chee-hwa as Hong Kong's first chief executive or head of government. In an attempt to stall his appointment they gave some support to a rival, Sir Ti Liang Yang, a former chief justice. However Mr Tung, strongly



Lu Ping (top) who backed Tung Chee-hwa as HK chief



backed by the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office (HKMAO) in Peking, wiped the floor with his opponents.

If anything, the HKMAO should have suffered a slight diminution of authority with the appointment of its current director, Lu Ping. All of Mr Lu's predecessors were far more senior in the party hierarchy. However, he has a deeper understanding of Hong Kong affairs which Mr Zhou is said to lack. Mr Lu, based in Peking, is able to speak Cantonese, the predominant Hong Kong lan-

guage, whereas Mr Zhou, who lives in the colony, cannot.

As the handover of power nears, Hong Kong has climbed higher up the agenda of the Chinese leadership. Sources close to the decision-makers in Peking say they are frustrated by the lack of accurate information coming from their officials in Hong Kong.

As long ago as 1992, Jiang Zemin, the leader of the Communist Party, established his own channels of communication and appointed the veteran Li Chuwen as his eyes and ears in Hong Kong. Officially, the Shanghai-based official, who previously served in Hong Kong, was supposed to be a special adviser to Zhou Nan.

Now there is an added complication caused by the pending establishment of a massive foreign ministry bureaucracy in Hong Kong after 1 July. It will be headed by Jiang Enzhu, the current ambassador to Britain. Mr Jiang has been trying to transfer the leadership of the local Communist Party's operations to his office but this is being resisted by Mr Zhou.

However, Mr Zhou will retire shortly after the handover of power and it remains to be seen whether he will be replaced by a high-ranking party official.

Hong Kong is seen as a rich prize by the Chinese bureaucracy, which explains why there is so much in-fighting for control ahead of the transfer of power. In theory, China will allow the territory to operate autonomously under its practice, China has already demonstrated that it will not be hands off.



Heat is on: Hong Kong's annual battle against the climate began last month, when humidity soared to 92 per cent

Photograph: Tom Pilsten

Spring reveals its first green shoes

HONG KONG DAYS

Hong Kong in high summer. Your linen shirt, carefully ironed in your cool, airconditioned apartment, will become a dishrag, welded moistly to your back, within minutes of your stepping outside. Dark pools will appear under your arms.

If you are female, that carefully blended foundation will slide inexorably down your face, while your beautifully coiffed hair becomes a rats' nest of damp tendrils round your shiny face.

As workers switch throughout the day from the humid, heavily polluted streets, where their pores open, to the icy cold of most airconditioned offices, where their pores close briskly around the grime of outside, skin complaints multiply.

To combat this, many women walk around town with white handkerchiefs held over their faces. Carry small handkerchiefs, or submit to the rigours

of their local beauty salon.

Men are far from exempt. The reason Hong Kong has so many successful tailors is not the tourist dollars, but the number of men whose sweaty knees go straight through their trousers as they traverse the island's many flights of stairs.

Everyone has a humidity horror story to tell. My own occurred while living there when, after a two week trip to Britain, I returned to find my bedroom door closed. I opened it to be confronted by a soft gush of spores. The room smelt as musty as a pair of three-week old socks. I opened the windows and turned on the fan and air-conditioner, but the smell remained.

Then, I opened the wardrobe. I have never seen the film *Alien*, but I am reliably informed that this was a close thing. Every item of clothing I had, every designer label (this

was Hong Kong), every cleanly laundered office shirt, was covered in a fine sprinkling of pale green.

This was nothing to the leather goods. My leather trenchcoat, my pride and joy, and worse, my much-loved leather trousers, were indistinguishable from astroturf. I could not pick them off the rails without the aid of rubber gloves.

The dry-cleaners were very understanding. They see this every summer. But the alienesque leatherwear had to be done by hand. Under the instructions of a long-term veteran of the humidity wars, and aided by a grimacing flatmate, I attempted field surgery. This involved large bowls of soapy water and numerous sponges. Even then the fungus had an unpleasant tendency to creep back after a couple of days if not monitored - especially in areas where one sweats the

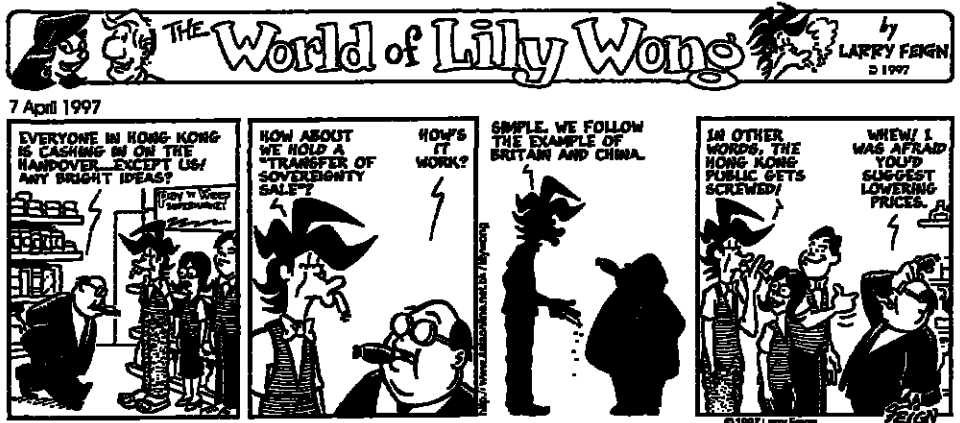
most - leading to some embarrassing moments of public mouldiness.

I got off lightly. One visiting professor at a local university - who wished to remain anonymous - had packed away some of his most important papers in sealed boxes. When he opened them some months later, nothing but a green fur remained.

On my most recent visit, the mould was restricted to the curtains and walls of my room. The walls with down easily and you get to life with the smell.

And frankly it is a lot easier to sleep when you consider that among Hong Kong's sharply divided social strata, mould is a great social equaliser. Those who suffer from the worst humidity are not the poorworkers on the streets of Kowloon, but the hyper-rich residents of the exclusive Peak district. I wonder how Anson Chai looks in green suede shoes.

Jojo Moyes



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arts

Given their devotion to the subconscious, it is not surprising that the surrealists spent a lot of time contemplating love: painting it, discussing it, even filling in questionnaires about it. A new exhibition in Paris guides us through their violent and ever-changing emotional landscapes. By **Matthew J Reisz**



Heart of darkness

"If you love love," went the slogan, "you'll love surrealism." Few other literary and artistic schools have been so fascinated by desire, sexual fantasies and anxieties, perversion, psychoanalysis and theorising about love. In January 1928, André Breton, the guiding spirit of the movement, assembled a group of male friends and got the ball rolling with the questions: "A man and woman make love. To what extent is the man aware of the woman's orgasm? Do you have any objective ways of telling?" "Yes," said painter Yves Tanguy (although, as the editor of the published version dryly comments, "we are not told what these are"). "There are no ways," says a second respondent; "It depends on the woman," says a third.

The composition of the group changed, came to include the photographer Man Ray, the painter Max Ernst, a Jesuit *abbé* who had fallen in love with an actress, and eventually a few women. There were fierce disagreements about homosexuality, rape, prostitution and "libertinism" as well as some weird digressions about succubi (or malevolent female spirits, said to haunt men in dreams). Yet, over a period of four and half years, there were 12 such discussions, covering the whole range of erotic experience, orgasms multiple, faked and simultaneous, and a good deal about how many times you had done what to whom at what age and in which positions.

Breton was asked if he enjoyed licking women's eyeballs, the poet Paul Eluard how he would react to an anonymous letter containing a pair of knickers and the words "I love you", although there were also some rather more serious questions about morality and the importance of love in life. All this can be read today in a book called *Investigating Sex* (published by Verso in 1992). At a distance of almost 70 years, much of it seems naïve, sexist, pompous, boastful and self-consciously shocking. But it is also astonishingly frank, brave and amusing. These meetings took place, after all, in a France still deeply under the sway of traditional Catholic "family values" – and decades before the invention of the *Cosmopolitan* quiz.

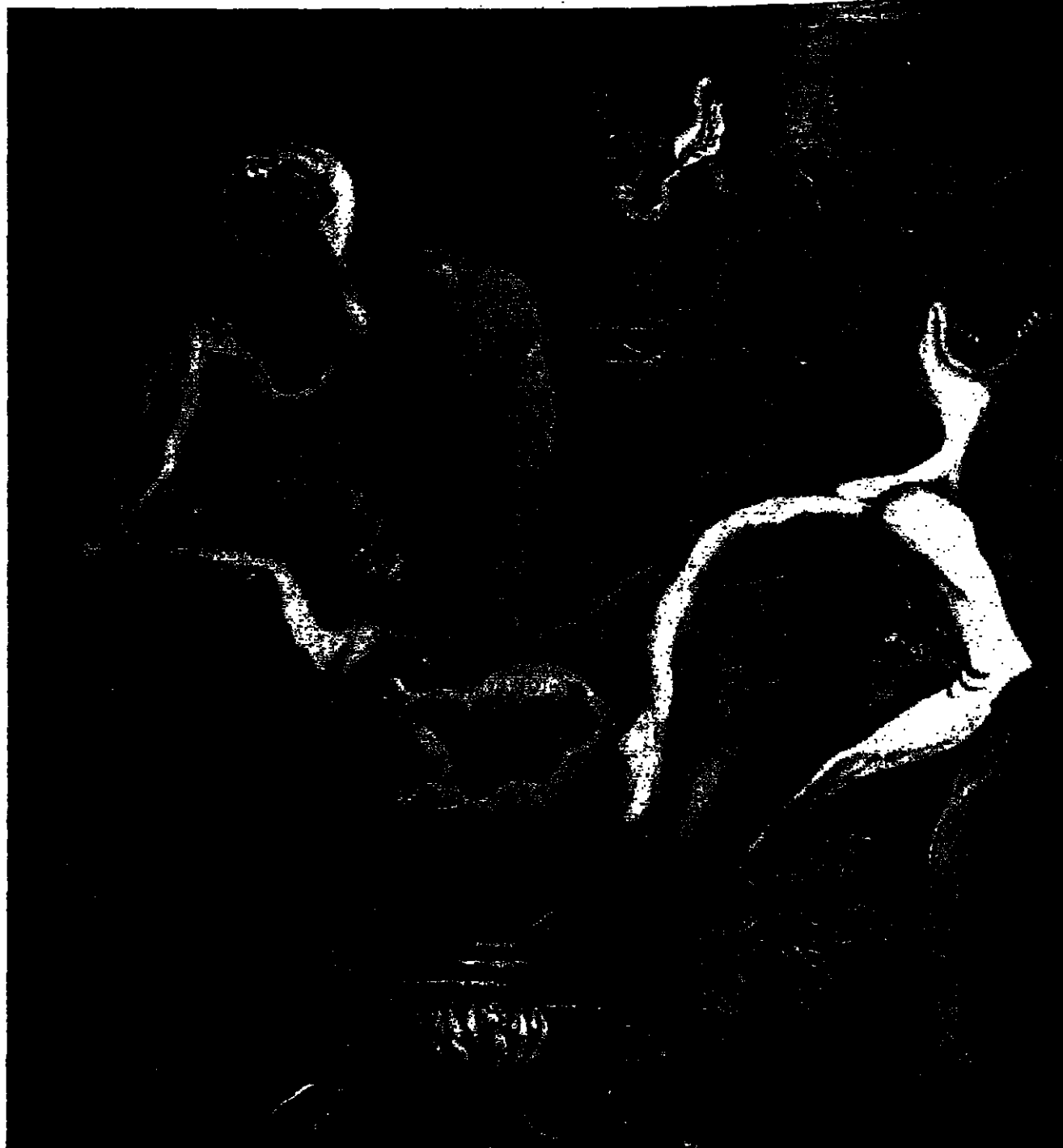
Drawing on this rich and colourful background, the Pavillon des Arts in Paris is now

hosting a splendid exhibition on "Le surréalisme et l'amour" (every day except Mondays and public holidays until 18 June). This brings together magazines, books of poetry and about 150 works by Ernst, Tanguy and Man Ray as well as artists from Dali to Duchamp, Magritte to Miro, and Penrose to Picasso.

Some, admittedly, are a bit like the doodlings of naughty schoolboys or the most tiresome sexist fantasies, such as Victor Brauner's wheeled, rocking-horse-shaped "ideal woman" *Andri-anopole*, specially designed to combine the attractions of "a tray of food and an infinitely docile instrument of pleasure". Even more bizarre is his *Surrealist Woman*, whose nose, chin, breasts, arms and shoes are all fitted with taps gushing water. Yet there are also many more tender images, many more interestingly disturbing or enigmatic images, and many which reveal the strange ballet of the surrealists' private lives.

The show starts with chance encounters and kisses and then proceeds to coupling. Even the kissing tends to be pretty savage. Magritte depicts a girl on a mountain ledge kissing a decapitated head floating in the sky; Picasso's *Kiss* is positively cannibalistic while Georges Malkine's consists of a mysterious throne room, knee-deep in water, with two chairs facing in different directions.

A section on *Le Couple* takes us to the heart of surrealist entanglements. The most famous tangle concerned Gala, the wife of Eluard, who first formed part of a threesome with Max Ernst and later wed Dali. ("Every good painter who aspires to the creation of genuine masterpieces," he once explained helpfully, "should first of all marry my wife.") There are great photos of the couples and trios, Ernst's obsessive sketches of Gala and a contemptuous drawing showing sketches of her and her husband pinned up on a wall. Picasso painted Dora Maar in purple, greens and blue, while she in turn portrayed him with piercing voyeur's eyes leaping out of a face shaped like a figure nine. Roland Penrose shows us the pale blue face of his wife Valentine, with a necklace of thorns, birds alighting on her hair, and shells and butterflies slowly taking over her mouth and eyes. Equally unsettling is the menacing memorial portrait which Wilhelm Freddie



The love that tries to speak its name: 'La Métamorphose des amants', 1938 by André Masson (main picture) and (inset) the cover for the catalogue of the 1959 international surrealist exhibition: 'Boite alerte, missives lascives' (Anonymous)

Photos: Christophe Walter / Paris-Musées

Painted for Emmy Hirsch: as half her body floats out to sea in a basket, a mysterious arm emerges from the waves, die in hand, while a little girl melts upon a nearby balcony.

Perhaps the highlight of the show is a superb selection of Man Ray's photographs. A haughty Nancy Cunard rests her chin on arms colonised by dozens of bracelets. A female torso by a window is dappled with light like a tree trunk. And the naked Meret Oppenheim, with ink up to one elbow, is "veiled" by the huge metal wheel of a printing press. The same artist also took a couple of articulated mannequins, called them "Mr and Mrs Woodman" and cheerfully snapped them in a variety of coital and coyly post-coital poses.

Far more upsetting are the cheap plastic dolls Hans Bellmer pulled apart and reassembled to form fetishised mutant women. Indeed, much of the exhibition consists of more or less anguished portrayals of women mating into birds or leopards, panther-headed yet still sexually available or even (in the case of a famous statue by Dali), giraffe-necked but fitted with open desk drawers. Wilfredo Lam painted *La Fiancée* with a tiny Russian doll's head and an axe-like silhouette. There is a feeling of mutilation in some collages made up of photographs of women cut up and reassembled into new patterns. Max Ernst's collage-novels, by contrast, juxtapose pieces of staid Victorian engravings to create a kind of deadpan parallel world, where stuffy bourgeois interiors are full of menacing intruders.

Comparatively few of the works on display are by women, although those that are appear equally suffused with menace and sexual violence. Mimi Parent's *Missress* is a Y-shaped whip made out of human hair. Valentine Hugo's *Symbolically func-*

tioning object is a montage where a blood-red hand grasps a white glove holding a dice, suspended over a section of a roulette table. Meret Oppenheim's terrifying *Dream of Barcelona* shows a strange nightmare creature like a semi-organic stone megalith slowly taking over the picture space. Far more cheerful is the pseudonymous Toyen's hilarious parody of male anxieties, a pair of panty hose with two huge smiling lips depicted on the crotch.

Throughout the exhibition, one finds people and objects metamorphosing into something else, trees into ejaculating males, hats into genitals, penises into stakes, the wine overflowing from a glass into fragments of a map. A mural of a wolf, covered in fungus, steps down from the wall. A heart unzips to reveal a hairy chest. A male spirit in a grand drawing-room unravels into a ball of wool. Couples merge, become wood sprites or strange pond-side vegetation. Much is extremely uncomfortable, yet one leaves exhilarated by the surrealists' bold explorations of the stranger recesses of human nature.

Along with their private discussions, the group also published in their magazines a series of slightly more respectable questionnaires. The organisers of the exhibition had the ingenious idea of dusting these off, submitting them again today to 60 painters, writers and private individuals and citing the responses in the catalogue. All were asked, for example, what sort of hope they placed in love, and whether they believed the glories of love can triumph over the sordidness of life.

There is a good deal of pretentious twaddle ("I put no hope in love – love is either certitude or

neurosis"), but also several interesting and touching replies to the question: "What was the most significant encounter of your life?" This was a particular obsession of the surrealists. Breton would leave the door of his hotel room open at night in the hope of waking up beside someone unexpected. He and his friend, the poet Louis Aragon, were both haunted by a non-*venere* with a young woman "of uncommon beauty and with immense eyes", whom Aragon had wanted to stop in the street – until he realised he had only two francs 20 in his pocket! Another put an ad in a lonely hearts column: "Poet seeks model for his poems. Posing sessions exclusively when we're both asleep. René Char, 8 rue des Saules, Paris (there's no point in coming before it's totally dark – light is fatal to me)."

The most significant encounter for one of today's Frenchmen was when his lungs met his first breath of air. For another, the day when he saw his eight-year-old sister dead. Most tell, however, of romantic encounters with the great love of their lives, or unexpected sudden glimpses of "a grave, fragile young man dancing on the grass, an adolescent with huge dark eyes sparkling in the silence of the day" or "a dazzling young woman in a faraway country, one spring evening by the sea, in a crummy, ill-lit little coffee shop".

The final question concerns the questionnaires themselves: are they still relevant or hopelessly dated? One reply would warn any surrealist's heart: "They are both relevant and striking, like a call to arms: Don't miss out on the chance of a re-encounter! Don't miss out on love!"

Le Surréalisme et l'amour, Pavillon des Arts, Les Halles, Porte Rambuteau (open daily except Mondays and public holidays). To 18 June

OPERA

Salome
Royal Opera
House, London

The head looks like it's still attached to the body, the bloody shroud hanging from it like Salome's eighth veil. The "child of admonition" has the man of God in her embrace at last, and for one awful moment, it's as if they are dancing. A waltz. Salome's waltz. The last waltz. And she's saved it just for him.

The closing scene of Luc Bondy's terrific production, newly returned to the Royal Opera House, succeeds where so many fail, in making a tragic figure, a sad, lonely, unloved figure, of Wilde's daughter of darkness, Salome, is "her mother's child" all right, born of indifference and lust, raised in darkness to reside in darkness. But she is also a victim, of resentment, of abuse, a living symbol of the lost innocence (as in "slaughter of the innocents") that will be her cruel stepfather's terrible legacy. Indeed, the whole look and feel of Bondy's staging suggests that Salome is Herod's just retribution, and that he and his are condemned to relive this terrible night for all eternity while his kingdom decays around him (so notes (albeit at a push for the top-most), she has the problematic low notes, sepulchral and venomous. What she doesn't have any more is the girlish *fortuna*, the silvery ascents, as chaste as they are sexy. But with a little imagination...

Which leaves the Herods, Kenneth Riegel and Anja Silja: he orange-haired and ridiculous, as free with his words (marvellous diction) as with the promises he can't keep, and still managing to sing through his paranoias; she looking and behaving more and more like Patsy in *Ab Fab*, ready and waiting with the silver charger in her daughter's moment of triumph. The dysfunctional family, BC. And how. Booking: 0171-304 4000

Edward Seckerson

THEATRE

Language Roulette
Bush, London

There's heavier drinking on the stage of the Bush at the moment than there is in the pub downstairs. It's Pound-a-Pint night at the local in Daragh Carrville's *Language Roulette* and *daft Ollie*, on the luridly literal-minded basis of having £20 on him, proceeds to buy 20 pints of Guinness – all at once, crowding them on to the table where they look like a health warning advert about weekly alcohol intake. Topped off with a few rounds of tequila slammers, a tray of flaming samboukas, and one or two little coloured pills, they provide the fuel for an evening of celebration that was always bound to turn nasty.

Language Roulette falls into the venerable tradition of the homecoming drama; a standby of dramatists since at least the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus. We're in Belfast in 1994 on the first evening of the ceasefire. Like the play's 27-year-old author, Joseph (Patrick Lennons), a young dramatist, has been away living on the continent. For reasons we only gradually piece together, he seems to owe an apology to the once incestuously close group of old school and college friends who have gathered together. While sworn enemies lay down their arms on the political front, former bosom buddies re-open hostilities.

Portrayed with a banteringly baleful, faintly satanic edge by the excellent Peter Ballance, the catalytic figure is Tim. Summing up with sardonic bitterness, this much practised shit-stirrer is determined that the truth will out



Pub games with penalties in 'Language Roulette' Geraint Lewis

about the reasons for Joseph's exile and his connection with Colin (Alan McKee), now a teacher in a Catholic school, and Colin's estranged wife Anna (a splendidly flinty Emma O'Neill), who wants the divorce he can't give her without losing his job. As the gormless, unwelcome goosberries at the resulting needle match, Thomas Lappin's Ollie, whose persistent jokes suggest an emotional age of around 11, and Maria Connolly, as the airhead he forlornly longs to bed, are both very funny.

The play's title comes from a game said to be played by Belfast ex-pats abroad, which involves going into a crowded place and roundly abusing the locals in English in the hope that they won't be able to understand. In a remote Albanian hamlet, this might be quite fun. Eventually indulged in via an orgy of obscenity by a bad-drugs-crazed Joseph, *Language Roulette* stands as a metaphorical ritual of risky revelation like the rounds of "truth or dare" the friends play. As a way of structuring themes and putting characters on the spot, games

have always been handy (one thinks, say, of the party in *Boys in the Band*, where the gay men play the game of having to phone the person they most love). Carrville, however, makes things a bit too easy for himself by shaping not just the scene but much of the play in this over-ready-made manner. The proceedings lack variety just as the climactic disclosures lack surprise.

There's terrific ensemble playing, though, in Tim Lonn's production for the Belfast-based company Tunderbox. And the crude, slangy dialogue, with its joshing references to the ephemera of the 1970s, its embarrassment over former idols (like Morrissey), its embittered God-swift puns, and its talk of the need to get "wasted", powerfully and unjudgementally evokes a hardened, cynical, pleasure-seeking generation of twentysomethings without illusions or ideals. Not a remarkable piece, but certainly an enjoyable and promising one.

Booking: 0181-743 3388 To 26 Apr

Paul Taylor

THEATRE

Hafod
Ely Hospital, Cardiff

According to the notes written to accompany this performance, Thomas Johnes was an 18th-century Welsh landowner – perhaps an equivalent to Wiltshire's William Beckford or Norfolk's Thomas Coke – who attempted to transform his Cardiffshire estate, Hafod, into a picturesque utopia. His daughter, Marianne, grew up there and became a gifted naturalist before falling ill with a wasting disease, while Johnes himself was eventually bankrupted by the enterprise. In 1807, Hafod was destroyed by a fire. Marianne died in 1811, followed by Johnes himself in 1813.

Performed in two disused psychiatric wards of Ely Hospital in Cardiff, where the company had developed the work over a period of 13 weeks, Brith Gof's *Hafod* offered, according to project director Clifford McLucas: "No Grand Unified Theory of Hafod. Thomas Johnes or, indeed, the 18th century. Instead you will witness a portrayal where architecture, historical reading and theatre come together to create a real, fractured and alien world."

After gathering in the car park of the hospital, we were led into the performance space where the 30 or so of us were then sent into either the upstairs or downstairs wards. Here, amid the institutional green painted walls and lino floors, we sat on rows of metal chairs, facing television screens showing white noise, and the still figures of actors wearing underwear, with bandages wrapped around their heads, Invisible Man-style.

Another formally dressed Invisible Man arrived to switch on the telly and the action began, with the screens showing live-relays of pictures from either our own level or the one above. As a metaphor

for the impossibility of understanding the world of the past, the business of the two separate levels worked very well. Shivers of the story slipped tantalisingly into view – Johnes in a periwig and silk stockings, Marianne writhing in Laban-movement madness – and then receded.

A few carefully-worked images splattered briefly: Marianne's pregnant belly as a shopping-bag full of rice that ruined a cascade of basmati on to the lino; Johnes's progress across the floor accompanied by a white mist of blown baby-powder (shades of the film *Ridicule*). The striking moment when Johnes confessed his carnal love for Marianne as she in question had been much in view. After a model of Hafod was burned and a blurry montage of scenes from a Huyley Mills film had appeared on telly for some time, the performance ended, and we all trooped back out to the car park.

It was strange, alright; it was alien; but – and I know it's reading against the text – there's a great story in there somewhere. While one had hoped for bold, crystalline images, what one got was often – like the pictures on the telly – decidedly low-resolution.

Phil Johnson

Tomorrow in the Tabloid: Tom Lubbock on the antique visions of Alma-Tadema

1250 من الأصيل

How wonderful of you to come!

Interview



Deborah Ross
talks to

JILLY COOPER

So, Jilly, have you decided who you are going to vote for come the election? "The Tories," she replies. Really, I say, you surprise me. I'd have had you down as a Labour voter. "Oh, but I've met John Major and he's lovely, a divine man, and I've met his wife, Norma, and she's just so perfectly sweet."

But Jilly, what about the Conservatives' policies? Shouldn't you be thinking of those? "Oh yes, their policies are terrible, aren't they?" she shudders. "Really ghastly. They've ruined education. And the NHS. They've done nothing for the arts, have they? I may shift, actually. In fact, I think I have shifted already. Yes, I'll vote Labour. Ohhh, look at that doggie. Poor, poor doggie. You can see its ribs. It must be starving." She winds down the window of the car in which we are travelling and blows the passing dog huge, wet mwah-mwah-sounding kisses. Yes, I cringe beside her. Who wouldn't?

Now, I know what you are thinking, because it's what I thought at first. You are thinking Jilly's as silly as ever. And, in part, you'd be right. Jilly Cooper can be hopelessly daft. ("I haven't seen my dogs since Sunday and I'm afraid I'm beginning to twitch," she moans). But this doesn't mean she isn't smart. It's just that she so wants you to like her.

In the back of the car, which her publishers have laid on for her, are boxes and boxes of Bendicks luxury chocolates. These, it turns out, are to give to fans and PRs and TV hosts plus anyone else she might encounter during this book-plugging day. She has purchased them herself at her own expense. They are very yummy.

Also, she is always incredibly flattering to interviewers. She tells us all we "must write a novel soon." She agrees excitedly with most of what I say, adding "how clever you are" or "how funny" or "what a good question. No, you can't be 35. You only look 24!" Of course, I like her more with each passing minute. I think, possibly, we may even be engaged.

But what is this all about? She is one of the top-selling authors in the country. Her latest book, *Appassionata* – her sex and Chopin novel – has only just gone into paperback but is already at Number Two in the charts. She is very rich. She owns a whacking great place in Gloucestershire plus a "sweet little house"

in Fulham. She can want for nothing, and has nothing to prove to anybody. Or so you might think. But the trouble with Jilly is that she really does think of herself as rubbish and always has done. Her mother was beautiful, whereas she wasn't and isn't. She disappointed her parents by failing to get into Oxford or Cambridge. "Everyone wants a daughter at Oxford or Cambridge, don't they?" she sighs. Later, after she'd married, she found she could not have children. "And I think if anything makes you feel inadequate, it's that. You tend to think of having children as a biological certainty, so it comes as a terrible shock when you can't." At various points, she refers to herself as "wet", "slow", "stupid" and "fat". Critics who are nasty cut her to ribbons. Ones who are complimentary "are just having a kind day".

I tell her I've been reading about this disorder called Imagined Ugliness Syndrome whereby perfectly reasonable-looking people go about thinking they are physically repulsive. Perhaps, I suggest, there is also an Imagined Inadequacy Syndrome whereby perfectly adequate people go about thinking they are hopeless. And if there isn't such a syndrome, there should be because it looks as if Jilly suffers from it.

At this, Jilly laughs one of her big, gap-toothed. Wife of Bath laughs then says: "Except, in my case, I don't think there is anything imag-

ined about it." Of course, this might just be affectation, but I don't think so. Plus it explains why she is so soppy about animals. (They love you unconditionally, don't they?) And why she stuck so steadfastly by her husband after his fall from grace. Perhaps she thought she would never do better. Does she like herself, I ask. "Yes, I mean, I think so. Although I don't like myself when I do mean-spirited things." Like what? "Like bitch behind people's backs. I'll say God that person's a terrible cow. Then they'll call and I'll say: 'Darling, how wonderful to hear from you.' Jilly, that's not mean-spirited. That's normal."

How, I ask, would she describe her novels? "I just write what I write," she says. But does she think they're any good? "I don't think they're anything, although they sometimes have wizzard jokes in them." She knows the literary establishment sneer at her and, yes, she does find it "very hurtful." To cheer her up, I tell her that whatever anyone might say about literary merit, she has probably brought more pleasure to a lot more people than, say, Martin Amis. At this, she gets quite tearful, grabs my hand, and repeats: "Oh, thank you, thank you." I am minded to tell her if she carries on like this I will

be forced to call off the engagement. Mostly, her books feature characters called Perdita or Viking who lurch from set-piece to set-piece via a great deal of improbable sex. Sex has always figured largely with her. She went to an all-girls boarding job where she spent much of her time "longing for boys" and using Gordon More toothpaste as lipstick ("It came out pink"). Of anyone currently living, who would she most like to go to bed with? She thinks

married Leo. "I spent a fortune on my mother's charge card," she recalls excitedly. "I bought a raincoat." A raincoat? For her wedding night? What was she expecting? "Rain. We went to Norfolk for our honeymoon. I bought a very pretty pink negligee, too. Ohh, I was so happy and in love."

Today, Jilly is wearing an old skirt with mostly eroded buttons down the front, a Laura Ashley white knitted top which has yellowed around the cuffs and a pair of black pumps which, if they are Russell & Bromley as she so claims, are Russell & Bromley from yonks and yonks ago. They are very well worn and worn down. I do not think she is very interested in clothes. Later, she confesses she still

owns that negligee and raincoat, and wears them too. Jilly got married in 1961. I am thinking of Jilly in her 35-year-old nightie and mac. I don't think she'd cut it as a heroine in one of her own novels, frankly.

First off, when we arrive, Jilly must rush to the loo so she can spray herself with something lemony from Penhaligon and apply Yardley's Autumn Glow foundation to her cheeks. She has, she says, a very florid complexion and unless she applies her Yardley: "I look like a Dutch cheese coming at you." Her

hands are midwifely and the mottled colour of a Blooms salami. Endearingly, there is dirt under her fingernails. "Now, you must write a novel," she repeats again as she sprays and smears and teases the famed hair-do with the exploding fringe. But Jilly, I tell her for the umpteenth time. I don't want to write a novel. I can't write a novel. I wouldn't know how to move characters from room to room. "Oh, that's easy," she exclaims. "You just say: 'Rupert went from the sitting room to the kitchen.'"

She is very kind to the fans who have queued up to meet her, and there are a great deal. Most are plain, Mrs Doyle types with flat hair parted down the middle and then brutally gripped with plastic slides on either side. "How wonderful of you to come," she says, squeezing their hands between hers. She is generous with her time, genuinely grateful they have bothered to turn up. She signs a good many books.

Her father, Bill, was a brigadier in the Army before returning to Ilkley, Yorkshire, where he became managing director of Spooner Owens. Her mother, Elaine, was divine in every sense. "She was extremely beautiful. Men would come to the house just to gaze at her. She was very dainty, never more than seven stone. Whenever she came to my school I was so proud, because she was always the most beautiful of all the mothers. I

wasn't fat as a child, but I was big. I was 11st 3lbs when I went on an exchange to France where I fell in love with the host's son, Michel, but one day he turned to his father and said about me: 'Papa, elle est grosse and laide.'"

Although brilliant at English, she was pretty useless at most other subjects at school so, instead of going the university route, she went the secretarial route before coming to London and marrying Leo Cooper, a publisher of military history books, whom she had actually known as a child. His mother had gone to school with her mother. "My first memory of Leo was looking out of my bedroom window in Ilkley and seeing him throw strawberry jelly at a girl who was rabbiting on about how much land her father had. I thought that terribly stylish."

She still doesn't know why she couldn't conceive. A gynaecologist just took a look and told her to adopt. So she did. She adopted Emily and Felix, now in their 30s. No, Emily and Felix have never been interested in tracking down their biological mothers, which she takes as a great compliment. As well she should.

I wonder, though, about her relationship with Leo, and not just because of that business in 1992 when it was revealed he'd had a mistress for six years. It's actually the little things she says that make me squirm. Leo, she says, "is very forthright, so if you've done something wrong he'll tell you." Leo, she continues, doesn't like puddings so "we never have puddings." Leo's never read one of her books. No, that's not true. He read one once when he had flu "but he said it made him feel a lot worse." Shortly after their marriage, he went through her wardrobe and chucked out most of her clothes. She allowed him to do so because "he has much better taste than me."

I wonder if Leo frightens her. Certainly, he seems to. And, yes, he does. "But, then, I think I frighten him too. I think all married couples frighten each other because they have the power to hurt each other, don't they?"

She was very, very hurt by his betrayal, but she didn't leave him and has never slugged him off. Instead, she proved herself loyal and steadfast and carried on churning out the books that support their lifestyle. She does her utmost to paint him in a good light. Leo's never minded her fame. Leo's very fair. "He'll watch England v Scotland at rugby and clap Scotland's tries." Plus, he was right to throw out the things he did. "I owned sarongsters. Terrible girle-like things which were like rubber chastity belts. They were vile beyond belief. You're too young to remember them." Being only 24? "Being only 24, yes." I think Jilly a very good egg. I just hope her husband knows it.

'Appassionata' is published by Corgi, £6.99.

Jilly Cooper: Does she like herself? I think so, although not when I do mean-spirited things, like bitch behind people's backs

Photograph: Glynn Griffiths

Perhaps there is an Imagined Inadequacy Syndrome, whereby perfectly adequate people think they are hopeless. Jilly has it

So, can a girl get a kick out of a football film?

'Fever Pitch' is the film that's supposed to explain football-frenzied men to baffled birds. Two women try it out

I went through a phase of being quite keen on watching football on television – the hypnotic appeal of *Match of the Day*, the Zen wisdom of John Motson, Ray Clemente elegantly hoofing the ball away from his goal-line while Kevin Keegan and the lads ran around in their ill-advised perms. We don't do anything fancy with our feet in everyday life, and these boys were artists. Liverpool won everything that season, and I was emotionally involved. It was also a welcome distraction from finals.

But that was a long time ago, and since then my attitude to the game has soured. Recently, it seems to me, the whole football fan thing has gone mad. Apart from coverage it ducing saturation television, it's now a compulsory special sub-

ject. Supporting a team with devotion bordering on mental ill health is no longer seen as sad, or strictly for men without inner lives or girlfriends. It's become fashionable.

I blame Nick Hornby. I haven't read *Fever Pitch*, but perhaps that's why I enjoyed the film. Fans of the book (almost everybody else) and Arsenal supporters expecting a feature-length football match will be disappointed, whereas I can't name an Arsenal player, have no attachment to the sacred text and was only there for Colin Firth in the starring role. The poster is not encouraging, showing him in unflattering Arsenal strip, arm raised in gormless, celebratory salute. But luckily the film bears no relation to this picture. It's engaging, has one or two very funny moments, excellent performances, great music and

made me feel ashamed of my weariness and snobbery. And if, like me, you have no memory of the 1989 League Championship season, with its legendary Arsenal vs Liverpool decider, you will also be in an agreeable state of agitated suspense. The point is that *Fever Pitch* is not a football film. It's more about growing up, relationships (the difficulty of persuading one's boyfriend to play ball, as it were), obsession, excitement and the bizarre business of being a fan. I can relate to that. But when Paul (Colin Firth) says to his uncomprehending girlfriend, "At least in football there's a chance that something might happen that we'll never forget for the rest of our lives", I really may have missed out.

Sarah Spankie



The finest flower of thirty-something manhood?

I like football, I like English men and I'm a sucker for sentimental love stories, which should make me the perfect viewer of *Fever Pitch*, the soccer film that is supposed to explain them (men) to us. I went to my first game aged about five (Flamengo playing at Maracana Stadium in Rio de Janeiro) and I still have the accessories – tiny red-and-black striped shirt and tattered flag. I even went out with a man who supported Leyton Orient, which takes dedication, optimism and, more important, a sense of proportion: he could take pleasure in a no-score draw and he could (more often) draw philosophical breath after defeat.

So I don't buy the tag-line to *Fever Pitch*: "Life gets complicated when you love one woman and worship 11 men."

I don't see why it should: it seems so obvious that any normal man could have football and love, assuming he had a shred of imagination.

This is what strikes me as bizarre about Paul, the hero of *Fever Pitch*, played by Colin Firth: you'd think the heat of his passion for Arsenal might warm the cockles of his heart. Instead, he behaves as if the emotions generated by football obliterate the possibility of any other love.

He is a teacher conducting simultaneous love affairs – the one with Arsenal, the other with Sarah, another teacher – but the first relationship is the one that counts. Paul is warm, fun, loveable; Sarah is dour, uptight, hard, just like George Graham, the Arsenal manager. It is endearing when he tells her that football allows

him to be a child – but he is so childish that he is incapable of saying he loves her.

Football is only a game, however beautiful, and most men, most football fans, know that, despite the *Loaded* culture that encourages men to be witless emotional cripples. And most women – like Paul's lover, mother and sister – are perfectly willing to accept Arsenal or Man U or (less common) Leyton Orient as another player in their communal life, and even to enjoy them.

I hope Paul's one-dimensional character is the product of slack film-making rather than a sharp documentary eye. For if this is the finest flowering of thirty-something manhood, we are all doomed to life in a lesbian separatist collective.

Emma Daly

Labour starts off with slippery leadership

"The idea that we have changed our policy is completely wrong," Gordon Brown reassured radio listeners yesterday. The Labour Party has always been totally in favour of privatisation, ever since anyone can remember. Or, at least, ever since last Thursday, when the Shadow Chancellor was caught out in a different interview on the subject of what he would do to plug the £2.5bn gap in the public finances currently filled by notional privatisation receipts in years two and three of the next government.

Of course, he could not give the truthful answer, that £1.5bn in one year followed by £1bn in another is a trivial sum in relation to the huge numbers tracked forward by the Government's tax and spending plans. Nor could he point out that the plans for the next two years, to which he has signed up, depend on a range of other unrealistic assumptions which are likely to put enormous pressure on him to raise taxes or maintain high borrowing if he steps into Kenneth Clarke's Hush Puppies.

Nor could he, in truth, sustain last Thursday's line, which was that there was a £1.5bn hole in Mr Clarke's finances too, because the Tories had not specified which sell-offs would fill it.

What was wrong with yesterday's about-turn on privatisation, however, was not the fact of it, which is a welcome development, but the timing, which exposed the miserable,

defensive me-tooism of New Labour.

Mr Brown's attempt to claim that the manifesto pledge of a "review" of public spending meant that Labour was already committed to selling off the last few bits of the family silver, and then auctioning the family bronze, wood and bric-à-brac, was transparent. The idea of compiling a "National Inventory" of public assets is as see-through a gimmick as the campaign has yet produced. Under Conservative plans to bring in "resource accounting", government departments are already well advanced in valuing all assets in the public sector – in particular the land and property which is the last area for substantial money-raising privatisation.

The Independent has, unlike the Labour Party, been in favour of privatisation since before last Thursday. We have been critical of the way some sales have been handled, and of the fact that Tory governments have relied on sales to flatter the nation's annual accounts. But the principles, of getting the state out of trading activity and of subjecting the provision of public services to the "enterprise of the market and the rigour of competition", are absolutely right.

What is perhaps most depressing about yesterday's U-turn is that Mr Blair and Mr Brown think so too. That last phrase is taken from the new Clause IV of Labour's constitution, which is a cut-and-paste compromise

between their "modernising" views and John Prescott's traditional wording. That same long sentence continues with the tortured double-speak: "...where those undertakings essential to the common good are either owned by the public or accountable to them". The meaning of which is as flexible as a piece of string.

We know what Mr Blair thinks about privatisation, but after nearly three years as leader the policy has not been sorted out. It is not as if the timing of this election has taken him by surprise. And it is not as if this issue is new: Mr Blair was asked exactly the same ques-

tion about privatisation receipts on Election Day in 1992. He did not answer it then. This time he has been forced to, but by the Tories in the middle of an election campaign. That is not leadership.

It is the same with a specific instance of privatisation, the railways. The promise of a "publicly owned, publicly accountable railway" has been quietly dropped from the manifesto. It was not a good promise, being extracted from Mr Blair by the trade unions at the 1994 Labour conference, but it was in the draft manifesto put to the membership and endorsed. So much for the "biggest

exercise in party democracy ever carried out". So much for leadership.

It is the same with Scotland. The policy has not been thought through. Mr Blair is in the silly position of giving a Scottish parliament powers he patently does not think it should have. Would it not have been better tactics, let alone what was right and democratic, to have said that Labour would not stand for the Scottish parliament on a policy of putting up tax, but that varying Scottish income tax in future would be a matter for the Edinburgh parliament? That would have been leadership.

Labour had a poor campaign in the first week of real battle. John Major is waging an effective guerrilla war as leader of the opposition, and the policies of the nearly-government are looking frayed already. The role reversal means Tory policy is not examined as closely as it might be. Michael Portillo, trying to embarrass Labour on privatisation receipts, cited the London Underground sell-off, forgetting that the Government has pledged to put all the proceeds back into investment.

But it is Labour's slipperiness that is worrying. Mr Blair's pitch is, above all, to offer leadership. One of the Prime Minister's most damaging traits has been his repeated attempts to get tough, lay down the law, insist he will not be moved – before being driven off course by the pressure of public opinion or events. If nothing else, Mr Blair

seemed to offer better. But leadership seems to mean being resolute about not having any policies determined to minimise the differences between the two main parties. "Thatcher without the Thatcherism," grumbled an anonymous Cabinet minister yesterday. There is, despite the caving, much in Labour's manifesto to commend it. But at this rate how much will be left by polling day?

It's small change for children

So children's living standards are falling. Average levels of pocket money have dropped for the first year since annual surveys started in 1987. This is either an outbreak of parental meanness on a grand scale or, as we also report today, perhaps the young ones are turning their backs on the materialism of their elders and throwing their lot in with Swampy and his eco-conscious crowd. But wait. Have the figures been corrected for the reluctance of Tory parents to declare offshore trusts? Or the unwillingness of street urchins to disclose supplements in the form of light shoplifting duties? Put Peter Snow's swingometer on the case and we'll find the drop is well within the margin of error. New Reeboks anyone?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Assassin the only winner in Middle East

Sir: The Middle East peace process was fatally flawed from the start. Those involved in the diplomacy do not represent their respective populations. Hamas beat Arafat's Fatah hands down in recent local elections and as Netanyahu's mandate is based on an alliance with fundamentalist religious parties he does not have broad support across Israel.

All agreements, all truces are like thin ice which might be at any moment break as a wave of resurgent popular opinion washes over it. Every time a new Jewish settlement is built and with every Hamas suicide bomb or Hizbollah ambush in South Lebanon there is a reaction from the opposite side.

The events which followed the initiation of building at Har Homa show how the tension can suddenly explode into overt violence. This has happened before. After the initial face-off there will be a return to the tension in which further attempts at diplomacy will be made. These will continue to fail irrespective of American intervention, as neither the Palestinians nor the Israelis seek peace for what it should be, an end to a conflict which dates back to Abraham. Rather the negotiations are a new war, fought not with guns and guerrilla tactics but from office to office, the two nations scoring points against each other instead of working together in pursuit of one goal. This goal has never been decided upon, until it is the see-saw of action and reaction will continue.

The optimism of the early Nineties was extinguished by one man. The real victor is Yigal Amir, Rabin's assassin. His aim, unlike those of any of the parties in the conflict, has been realised. It might be suggested that Yigal Amir was the only one who really knew what he wanted. OLIVER ISAACS Leeds

Sir: I visited both Israel and the Occupied Territories in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza on several occasions between 1977 and 1992, meeting both Israelis and Palestinians. In 1992, and since, I have asked Israeli ministers and ambassadors whether the settlements in the most exposed and sensitive places, e.g. Hebron and Gaza, could not be removed, in accordance with UN Resolution 242 and the principle of land for peace.

The settlements in question cannot be said to contribute to the security of Israel; they are a liability. The *quid pro quo* should be an international guarantee of permanent access for bona fide religious reasons for Israelis and Jews from the rest of the world, to such holy places as the burial place of Abraham in Hebron and the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, in parallel with access by Christians and Muslims to their holy places. A precedent for withdrawing settlements exists in respect of those in Sinai, under the Camp David agreements. There were of course objections and protests, but both settlers and military installations were moved.

The present government of Israel depends to some extent upon the votes of the religious parties in the Knesset. I trust that this short-term political situation will not be allowed to put at risk the existing peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan and to make impossible a negotiated peace with Syria and Lebanon. The world has the strongest possible interest in a



comprehensive Middle East peace. The EU should make access to European markets conditional on the observance of the 4th Geneva Convention and the human rights clauses of the Oslo agreement.

The time has come to ensure that UN resolutions do not remain a dead letter and that the essence of undertakings, given in Madrid in 1991 and Oslo in 1993, is fully respected. Lord HYLTON House of Lords

Bristol's lesson on voting reform

Sir: Ian Onions' report on Bristol's election (4 April) should stimulate discussion about electoral reform after the general election. First, he tells us that the only Bristol result that has not already been decided by the Boundary Commission is Bristol West. Then he illustrates the confusion among anti-Tory voters, a clear majority of the constituency, as to how to vote to remove their Conservative MP.

His interviews show that people's impressions about which party can beat the Tories depend on where they live and what party their local councillors are. This is national as well as a local problem. Since first-past-the-post is a game that only two contenders can play, three-way marginals are a real problem for the voters.

Only the voting system stands between William Waldegrave and defeat. Not surprisingly, he is the only candidate standing on a platform to keep the status quo. STAN RICHARDS Bristol

Sir: Ian Onions' report failed to convey the surge of support that Labour has enjoyed in Bristol West since the 1992 general election, when they were indeed third.

In the European elections in 1994 Labour had 33.5 per cent of the vote, putting the Liberal Democrats in third place with 29.9 per cent (Conservatives, 33.2 per cent). In the most recent local council elections, in 1995, the trend was more evident, with Labour first again, with 34.2 per cent of the vote, widening the gap between them and the Conservatives who had 32.1 per cent. Again, the Liberal Democrats were third, with 29.1 per cent.

Labour looks the more likely party to snatch victory from Waldegrave. ANGELA CAUSEY Bristol

Rational answer

Sir: Dominic Kirkham's confusion is pardonable (Letters, 2 April). Philosophical rationalism, as employed by idealist and absolutist philosophers, is indeed an abstract idea; but critical rationalism, as employed by empiricist and analytical philosophers and scientists (and followed by the Rationalist Press Association), is a practical rule that all arbitrary assumptions and authorities should be rejected and that all propositions should be subjected to the test of reason. NICHOLAS WALTER Rationalist Press Association London N1

Gaps in the party manifestos

Sir: You suggest that the Conservative manifesto's proposal for transferable tax allowances would "endow women who stay at home" (leading article, 3 April).

The proposal endows not women who stay at home, but their tax-paying earning husbands. Research indicates that we cannot safely assume that the extra money the latter receive in their pay packets will be passed on to the former. Ironically, a proposal which reinforces the economic dependence of non-waged women upon their husbands is the centrepiece of a manifesto which aims to replace the false security of dependence with the real security of independence. Of course it is public dependence on the state (in the form of cash benefits, not tax relief) that counts here, not private dependence within the family.

If the Conservatives are genuinely concerned to promote the economic independence of those at home providing care, they would do better to target the resources directly on those providing the care through improved cash benefits, such as child benefit and the invalid care allowance.

RUTH LISTER Professor of Social Policy Loughborough University

Sir: The letter "Disabled voters are waiting" (4 April) prompts me to

note that we now have the manifestos from the three largest British political parties, and there is not a great deal in any of them about people with disabilities, and very little indeed about people with learning disabilities.

What we need over the next few weeks from party candidates is a firm statement about the inclusion of people with disabilities within education, housing, training and employment. After that the Government must include a disability statement within each of its major social programmes. Too often and for too long, the policy proposals have appeared and the impact on people with disabilities has been an afterthought. The Government and Parliament must get this right, at least.

Lord RIX Chairman Mencap London EC1

Sir: One reason given by John Norris (letters, 5 April) for supporting the Green Party is that Newbury's Liberal Democrat MP David Rendel supports the destructive Newbury bypass "even after ex-roads minister Steven Norris has admitted it was an error".

During his eight years as a county councillor Steven Norris scorned proposals for reducing road traffic, but happily progress has recently been made with Don Foster's Road Traffic Reduction Bill, supported by David Rendel. Steven Norris did not say that the bypass was an error, but that he

would have preferred an expensive central route.

Perhaps both Mr Norris would note the comment by Charles Secrett, director of Friends of the Earth, that the Lib Dem manifesto "is the greenest ever produced by any major party in Britain". Join a major green party, gentlemen! TREVOR BROWN Newbury, Berkshire

Sir: Labour and the Conservatives are falling over each other to proclaim that "families are the core of our society". Are the Liberal Democrats alone in believing in equal rights for singles? SUE RUSSELL Liberal Democrat Social Security Spokesman House of Lords London SW1

We're no ladies

Sir: David Foster (letter, 5 April) is right. Young women do squirm at the word "ladies". It's funny that many of the generation above think we should be pleased to be so termed. It's got something to do with the helplessness, dependency and fragility the word implies.

Reject "lady" and reject the notion that women need to be treated very gently. Embrace "woman" and embrace independence, choice, freedom, financial security... the right to be wild, to dress as we like, be cheeky, enjoy a rude joke, appreciate puns of bitter in a good local (a "lady" wouldn't), take or leave a man without terrible consequences. All the things that make life good for young women today. LORNA SHEARMAN Winchester

Long shadow of Gandhi's pyre

Sir: The lack of troops to ensure order and provide security at Gandhi's funeral was even more severe than Paul Elmhirst recalls (letter, 5 April), and threw a long shadow.

At the climactic moment there was a real danger of an accidental snuff – that the uncontrolled thrust of the multitude would impel the Viceroy and his party from the front row of the mourners on to the flaming pyre. The memory of that narrow escape stayed with one of the Indian Army officers present, J N Chaudhuri, so when Jawaharlal Nehru died in 1964 Chaudhuri, by then army chief, immediately ordered an extra brigade of troops into Delhi to ensure that this time the obsequies would be orderly.

But Indian politicians have never fully shared Western faith that the Indian Army will never assume a political role – indeed, they have sometimes been quite paranoid in their fear of the generals. So it was in 1964. Learning of the troop movements, ordered by General Chaudhuri the intelligence chief, B N Mullik, hastened to warn Prime Minister Nanda that a coup might be in the making. Reinforcements of armed police were rushed into the capital and the army chief was kept under surveillance. It was a false alarm, of course. General Chaudhuri's exertions that day were wholly professional and merely laid him low with heat-stroke. NEVILLE MAXWELL Oxford

Price of failure to back teachers

Sir: Like many teachers, I would agree with much of Victoria Bonsted's letter (4 April) regarding classroom discipline. Too often it is the quiet majority in the classroom who suffer from the disruptive actions of a minority.

An article in the same issue of *The Independent* ("School told to take back pupil with gun") shows very clearly how even the most determined school management can be sabotaged by outside influence.

The changes in schools introduced by the present government, and apparently endorsed by Labour, especially those giving more power to parents and encouraging competition between schools, have limited the freedom of action of both teachers and school managements. This would be bad enough, but by constantly denigrating schools and teachers, as the Conservatives did for much of the 1980s and 1990s, a "double whammy" was delivered to those trying to maintain discipline in the classroom. The costs of that short-sighted policy are now visible.

However there are no "quick fix" solutions to an age-old problem – even Mr Chips found discipline a problem at the start of his career. GILES M D FALCONER Deal, Kent

Macho madness

Sir: Your report on the different size of cars allocated to female and male managers (5 April) said many "women bosses" felt hard done by. I prefer to think that women managers have greater confidence in their status and are more conscious of the damage done to the environment by gas-guzzlers, and so opt not to "be allocated" these absurd and damaging symbols of power. ROGER TREDDALE Whaley Bridge, Derbyshire

Insurers who just won't learn

The salespeople are up to their old tricks in the pensions market. Nic Cicutti looks at ways of keeping the industry honest

Tony Baker is a worried man. A few weeks ago, during a routine telephone call to a journalist, the deputy head of the Association of British Insurers gave vent to his anguish: "Why are we under attack? What do we have to do in order to get a better press?"

Only a few days before, members of the House of Commons Treasury select committee had vented their spleen on the insurance industry's top regulator, Colette Bowe. The anger of MPs was directed at the failure of the Personal Investment Authority, which Ms Bowe runs, to oversee swift redress by insurers to hundreds of thousands of victims of the pensions transfer scandal. Between 1988 and 1993, more than 1.5 million people were wrongly persuaded by insurance salesmen to switch out of perfectly adequate company pension schemes and into private ones. The casualties could lose many thousands of pounds each as a result.

In the course of a bitterly hostile appearance, Ms Bowe told the committee that barely 8,000 people – out of some 500,000 urgent cases – had been paid compensation. In fact, as she conceded, almost 15,000 victims of the scandal have died since her organisation committed itself two years ago to secure payments for those mis-sold a personal pension.

Ms Bowe's admission is the least of the insurance industry's problems. Tonight, it will come under the spotlight over another pension-related issue. A joint investigation between *The Independent* and *World In Action*, the Granada TV programme, will show that hundreds of thousands of personal pensions sold last year (one third of the 900,000 total) may be worth less after two years than the amount paid into them.

The investigation, featured in this newspaper on Saturday, reveals that despite claims by Mr Baker's members

Commission payments are being subsidised by taxpayers

that they have been born again after the pensions mis-selling scandal, someone forgot to pass the message on to the industry's stormtroopers. *World In Action* is planning to show how a succession of insurance company salespeople recommended inappropriate long-term pension products to one of its researchers, whose employment with the television company is due to end in September.

The programme also highlights perhaps the most significant issue, that of the extent to which all of us as taxpayers are paying for the industry's scams. Each year, the Government pays billions of pounds of taxpayers' money towards personal pensions set up by some eight million policyholders. The money comes in the form of generous rebates, so that for every £100 of gross premiums paid into a private scheme, the Inland Revenue chips in at least £23 of that amount. This rises to £40 for higher-rate taxpayers, leaving them to find just £60 in contributions.

But if, as our investigation shows, significant numbers of policyholders may receive less when their policies mature than was actually paid in, who actually benefits? The answer is that insurance companies themselves do, through the massively high initial charges levied on pensions they sell. Their profits come out of our pockets.

For insurance salespeople this cash is manna from Heaven. Their commission payments are in effect being subsidised by taxpayers to the tune of hundreds of millions of pounds a year. For the rest of us, this state of affairs cannot be allowed to continue.

There are several ways in which reform can take place. The first is the organic approach, where insurance companies gradually overhaul themselves and begin to offer better value to their policyholders. This is already happening in part: even so, progress is painfully slow.

John Denham, Labour's shadow pensions minister, offers new "stakeholder" pensions, set up by a mixture of employers' organisations and trade unions. These would offer insurers the option of competing in price terms or going under. Or, if they wanted to tender for the right to manage these new funds, they would have to charge low, low prices.

John Chapman, the former Office of Fair Trading official whose research we have published, has a third solution. Why not simply halt tax rebates into private schemes that either have a large number of policyholders leaving them early or don't lower their prices? Doing so would swiftly bring the recalcitrant to heel, he claims.

Of course, this won't make Mr Baker or his members happy. But then, on the available evidence, Mr Baker is not at present a happy man anyway.



Police searching cars at Aintree yesterday: in IRA terms, Saturday's events were a signal success Photograph: Robert Halliam

The IRA's grand strategy

by David McKittrick

Talking to republicans in Belfast at the weekend, one was struck again by how thoughtful and calculating they can be in plotting and planning their characteristic blend of politics, propaganda and the application of terror.

What happened in England last week was violence, but it was anything but mindless. It will come as little consolation to all those whose enjoyment of a great sporting occasion was marred, and especially to those who spent an uncomfortable Saturday night in Liverpool recreation centres, but their discomfort was all part of a grand plan.

Listening to the republican explanations and analysis serves as a reminder that these people see themselves as playing a vast game of chess. It is chess on a boobytrapped board, with pieces which may explode at any moment, but in their minds it none the less has rules and a purpose.

Last week's disruption was the equivalent of making a few seemingly inconsequential moves which suddenly develop into a full-blown attack. The railway and motorway disruption originally seemed to be of mainly nuisance value, but they paved the way for the evacuation of Aintree. That new tack has opened up a whole new vista of headaches for the security authorities.

As one republican put it to me: "This is a lower-level military campaign aimed at disruption and sabotage more than the spectacular stuff." It is affecting tens of thousands of people, so it takes on a British national character. "The fact that Aintree was in IRA terms a signal success probably means that more of the same will follow."

A senior republican described it as a strategy aimed at maximum disruption and maximum publicity coverage with a minimum of threat to the lives of the civilian population. It is also aimed at the election campaign.

But what do they hope to gain from it all? Republicans explain that in the short term it means that they cannot be ignored in the election, and that it keeps Ireland on the agenda. In the longer term it "reminds the incoming government that the IRA's campaign can be effective and can hurt them economically."

Republicans view yesterday's defiant comments from John Major and Jack Straw with a pinch of salt. The two main British parties may say the disruption will set back Sinn Féin's possible entry into talks, but this tune will change, republicans claim, once the election is out of the way. They predict that the next government, especially if it has a working majority, will move to do business with them. They

expect an interregnum, particularly if Labour get in – "new faces in town, they're not going to do anything too speedily".

The political talks are due to resume on 3 June. Republicans do not expect to be there, but they expect that within weeks of the election the new government will privately be putting out feelers towards them. "The British are not stupid people," said one activist. "They must know that republicans want to do business with them."

The goal is to get into negotiations. It is clear enough that a second IRA cessation will be on offer; it is also clear that it will not happen unless the next government gives a guarantee that it will lead automatically to Sinn Féin's entry into multi-party talks.

In other words, all this chaos is aimed at securing Sinn Féin's place at the conference table under the best terms possible. They forecast that the ill-will generated by the wrecking of

'This is a low-level military campaign aimed at disruption and sabotage more than the spectacular stuff'

the Grand National will, post-election, have evolved into a sober realisation that the only way to cope with republicans is to sit down with them.

Republicans remark that, in the wake of major IRA bombings such as last year's attacks at Canary Wharf and Manchester, many British people taking part in television and radio programmes said the Government should talk to them. This is an important factor tucked away in the minds of the men making those deadly little chess moves.

They did not say so at the weekend, but they will have at least two other factors in their minds. One is that last year MI5 and the other security people had one of their best years against republicans in Britain, rounding up one gang which has been described as the IRA's "A-team" and preventing a number of major attacks. Aintree seems to indicate that the IRA has made a successful comeback.

The other is that a campaign which concentrates on sabotaging normal life in England rather than on taking lives has all the appearances of being carefully fashioned to fit in with the election going on in Northern Ire-

land. Three of Sinn Féin's leadership team – Gerry Adams, Martin McGuinness and Pat Doherty – are in with a shout of winning three of the 18 Northern Ireland seats.

But all three look like being close contests, and every vote will count. Some of those votes would be lost if the IRA were to set about causing civilian carnage, but Aintree-style activities tend not to cost Sinn Féin votes. They could in fact even help Sinn Féin, since some floating voters who want another ceasefire will draw the message from this type of attack that republicans are intent on positioning themselves for a second cessation rather than on re-starting the whole war again on its previous scale.

If Sinn Féin does win seats, it may well be due as much to highly localised factors as to the overall republican strategy. None the less a win is a win, and even though republicans do not take their Commons seats, the election of two or three new Sinn Féin MPs would be a tremendous boost.

The republican strategy is thus gradually emerging into public view. Sinn Féin will try to win seats so that it can argue it has an increased mandate. The IRA will grab the headlines with attacks in England and Northern Ireland, but try to concentrate on spectacular acts of sabotage and hope to avoid electorally-damaging civilian casualties.

It is a cunning strategy but it has flaws. The 1994 cessation brought a great surge of international goodwill towards Ireland in general and republicans in particular, but much of it has drained away since the resumption of violence. Asking the next government to trust in republican *bona fides* is asking it to take an enormous risk. Many of those who believed in the 1994 cessation will approach the idea of cessation mark two with great suspicion. It is obvious, now as then, that there are a great many in the republican ranks who would be done with war, but there also many in there who envisage their way ahead as being through a mix of politics and bombs.

The second flaw is presently in the ascendance. The republicans will offer a ceasefire in return for guaranteed access to the conference table, yet this will be asking the new government to take on trust that the saboteurs of today will, overnight, turn into the democrats of tomorrow.

The last cessation perished because of an almost universal lack of goodwill and mutual faith. Aintree may have illustrated that republicans still have the capacity to bring chaos to Britain, but it is also helping to ensure that any post-election negotiations will take place in an atmosphere just as bereft of trust.

Looking for candidates in Kettering

I am enchanted by the amateurish nature of British politics. Last week I wrote about my endeavours to discover in which constituency I lived (Kettering). This week I have had a similar hunt for the candidates.

You can look up "Political Organisations" (not "Parties") in the *Yellow Pages*. So I did. The Conservative Party had an answer phone giving a number in London. Their candidate is Roger Freeman, who has held the seat since 1983, had a 20 per cent majority in the last election, and is a Cabinet minister. Perhaps these are good reasons why the other parties seem so cheerfully casual.

Neither Labour nor the Liberal Democrats have a constituency office. However the Labour Party in Corby gave me the home number of Phil Sawford, the candidate here, so I rang and his wife an-

swered. They are *Independent* readers. As soon as I said my name, my cover as disinterested floating voter was blown: they had read last week's article, and had already looked me up on the electoral register and were poised to send me information. Rosemary Sawford was slightly shocked that I had not known my constituency, and slightly apologetic, too. She explained the difficulties in contacting rural voters – bad maps, homes off the public road, electric gates and "large" ferocious dogs all make the canvasser's life tricky. It was even harder, she pointed out, for voters at the other end of the constituency, where several wards were in Daventry for local government elections and Kettering for Parliamentary ones. The Labour Party are circulating a map that shows all the wards (called "communities") in the constituency.

The Liberal Democrat office in neighbouring Northampton did not know who the Kettering candidate was; but they found the names of a couple of borough councillors, one of whom eventually told me that Roger Aron was formally adopted by the party on Friday night (an event so thrilling that it did not make the Saturday edition of the *Evening Telegraph* – our local daily – although Eddy from *The Archers*' successful appeal against the termination of his farm tenancy did). I spoke to Aron's agent, Stuart Simons, who did not know his candidate's position on anything much "yet". He told me that "the gossip" was that the Referendum Party, and the National Democrats "or whatever the National Front are called now" – were all going to field candidates, and that lots of Old Labour voters support "hardcore"

New Labour, so it was hard to guess how well the Liberal Democrats would do – "at least as well as last time", he hoped (15.4 per cent). But he sounded as though he was having enormous fun. The two world-class politicians who obviously enjoy campaigning, Bill Clinton and John Major, do surprisingly well in elections, so perhaps there is hope for Kettering Liberal Democrats.

There are no copies of any manifesto in the local library. I haven't yet seen an election poster. But I got my first political communication delivered on Saturday afternoon – from the Labour Party.

All I need now is to learn as much about their ideas as I've been told about their children's names and ages!

Sam McKittrick

the commentators

At last the debate, live from the computer

I suddenly occurred to me over the weekend that instead of having to wait nervously in case there might be a public TV debate between party leaders, it would be quite possible in this technological age to get it all over with now. Accordingly, I spent the weekend programming the mighty *Independent* computer to simulate a public debate between our leaders in a brief digestible form.

What I did was to feed into the computer all the known facts about the parties, some things that haven't come out yet and their general level of argument. I then asked it to produce a short but spirited projected debate of the kind we could expect.

This is what it came up with.

Dimbleby: Hello, I am a computer amalgamation of all known Dimbleby brothers, and I am

here to welcome you to Election Question and Answer Time, which comes today from the BBC Campaign Bus. Mr Major, would you like to kick off with a brief statement?

Major: May I just say that when I heard about Aintree...

Blair: May I just say that the same goes for me?

Major: When I first heard about Aintree, it meant very little to me as I have got enough to worry about already.

Blair: And same here.

Major: I mean it's not as if anyone was hurt.

Blair: You could almost say that life was saved by calling the Grand National off – horses' lives, at any rate.

Major: But then my advisers told me differently...

Blair: And so did mine...

Major: They told me that I would lose votes if I were not appalled...

Blair: By the whole tragic episode...

Major: So I was, I was absolutely appalled...

Blair: And so was I...

Major: By the totally unnecessary loss of racing...

Blair: And by the reckless disregard for people's pocket money...

Major: Shown by the IRA...

Blair: In their attempt to disrupt the Grand National Race at Aintree on Saturday.

Major: Which succeeded.

Blair: Which succeeded.

Major: Which did not succeed...

Blair: Which did not succeed...

Major: Because we never admit

that the IRA has succeeded at anything...

Blair: For to admit that the IRA had succeeded at anything, would only be to encourage them...

Major: Which we can never do.

Blair: And nor can we.

Major: On this at least we are united and of one mind.

Blair: I concur.

Major: Like and Kerr? Who are they?

Blair: It's a computer error.

Major: Oh, right.

Dimbleby: Well, you seem to be of one mind so far, so perhaps we can move on to a topic which may produce more fireworks. And the first question comes from...

Ashdown: Paddy Ashdown.

Dimbleby: What is your line of business, Mr Ashdown?

Ashdown: I am a party leader and I want to know why I wasn't given equal opportunity.

Dimbleby: To have a chance to express my shock and horror over what happened at Ascot.

Dimbleby: Aintree.

Ashdown: Aintree. After this terrible outrage, I saw people stumbling from the course, money streaming from their pockets...

Major: I saw people with their empty wallets hanging out...

Blair: We all saw the victims, hit by this bolt from the blue...

Ashdown: One moment, solvent and happy...

Major: The next moment, without even their bus fare home.

Blair: We saw poor innocent horses, deprived of the chance to break their legs and be destroyed...

Major: The tragedy of Des Lynam, without even a handkerchief to staunch Jenny Pitman's tears...

Ashdown: The 99-year-old Peter O'Sullivan being led away to be put down quietly...

Blair: All this could have been avoided if only the Government had spent more on education.

Major: That's all very well, but where are you going to find the money?

Blair: Yes, but...

Major: Yes, but...

Dimbleby: I am afraid to say we have just received a coded message to say that this programme is about to be blown up, so I am afraid I shall have to clear the studio...

I am afraid that that simulation somehow got mixed up with some horse-racing software. I will try again nearer the election date.

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obituaries / gazette

Allen Ginsberg

Allen Ginsberg was the exemplary avant-garde figure of the post-war world. In verse, in politics, in his own intimate life — there was no room for a "private" life — Ginsberg resisted and disdained the orthodox, the social lie. Few people have done as much to make non-conformism respectable in our time as he did.

Surprisingly, though, for one who was feted as a revolutionary as far back as the mid-Fifties, he never became the victim of his own progressiveness. It was never felt about him that he was passé. His liking for experiment did not lead him to the extremes of addiction that claimed, temporarily, William Burroughs and, permanently, Jack Kerouac.

Ginsberg managed to stay in one place — he made his home in New York's Lower East Side for most of the half-century — and keep moving all at once. Those who observed him from a distance could be annoyed or bemused by what seemed to be exhibitionistic political or poetic antics, but almost everything he chose to do had a rationale, even if it was the rationale of absurdity. Few artists succeed in fusing life and work, so that one touches the other in a constant interplay, as Ginsberg did.

Ginsberg, Kerouac and Burroughs, who came to be seen as the "holy trinity" of the Beat Generation (though others disliked the term and later accused Ginsberg of marketing the concept), were introduced to one another in student digs around New York's Columbia University in the spring of 1944. Ginsberg was the callow one. Burroughs and Kerouac, both older, treated the frenzied, sexually confused, over-talkative "little Allen" with affection but also sometimes with impatience.

At that time, Ginsberg's ambition was to be a lawyer, serving good causes. He studied in the English department of Columbia under Lionel Trilling, and made attempts (not entirely vain ones) to seduce Kerouac. Later, it was Burroughs who fell hopelessly in love with Ginsberg, and it was the former's letters to the poet, written from Tangier in the mid-Fifties, that formed the basis of his apocalyptic novel, *The Naked Lunch* (1959).

Ginsberg's father Louis was a poet who published slight, accomplished verses in newspapers and anthologies, and Ginsberg's own early work is highly wrought, formal, often archaic in tone. It was his struggle to come to terms with his personal difficulties in the late

Forties that eventually led him to his proper place in poetry. Mental turbulence (his mother was hospitalised for most of Ginsberg's life, and he himself had a spell in a psychiatric hospital in 1949), sexual ambiguity coupled with self-disgust, and literary inhibition, if not total failure, were conspiring to push him into a life of frightened conformity — a grand fib of social sanity conditioned by the terror of what lay beyond it. At this time, the homosexual crusader was nowhere in evidence. Far from it: at the behest of his analyst, Ginsberg had embarked on a programme of committed heterosexuality.

The crucial experience of those years — perhaps of his whole life — had occurred the year before he entered the Columbia Psychiatric Institute. While reading William Blake in a his Harlem apartment, Ginsberg had a vision of first Blake himself, then God. He never denied its validity.

My first thought was this was what I was born for, and second thought, never forget — never renege, never deny — don't get lost mentally wandering in other spirit worlds or American or job worlds or advertising worlds or war worlds...

The pivotal point of a spiritual and poetic development that began then can be dated quite precisely. In December 1955, at the Six Gallery in San Francisco, Ginsberg read the first part of his poem "Howl, for Carl Solomon". Gary Snyder, Michael McClure, Robert Duncan and others were also present. All the poets were up to something new, but it was "Howl" with its long Whitmanesque lines, its mixture of lyricism and obscenity, its gauche but heartfelt desire to immortalise Kerouac, Neal Cassidy and other members of the group, that caught the moment. Michael McClure later described the scene:

Ginsberg read on to the end of the poem, which left us standing in wonder, or cheering and wondering, but knowing at the deepest level that a barrier had been broken, that a human voice had been hurled against the harsh wall of America and its supporting armies and navies and academies.

With "Howl", Ginsberg achieved a nakedness in poetry that reflected his soul. No more formalism in verse — and, to boot, an end to attempts to conform in everyday life. With just the kind of misleading eagerness to slot poets into "schools" that Ginsberg was reacting against, academic criticism of the Sixties came to identify the fashionable "confessional" mode with Robert Lowell, Sylvia Plath and

John Berryman; but it was "Howl" (as Lowell acknowledged) that helped to make possible the others. It is also worth noting that while the three poets mentioned began in gladness but ended in despondency and madness, to make a rough summary of Wordsworth, Ginsberg wrestled with his madness, as a poet "wrestles with rhyme", as Robert Duncan might put it, to emerge into a personal freedom.

The urge to strip off social disguises was carried over into the realm of performance art, and while the purpose was therapeutically serious enough, the result was funny as well. On more than one occasion, he contorted a startled heckler (and there were quite a few, especially early on) with a marching striptease to a reading of "Howl". A more significant result of this urge to freedom in all of Ginsberg's actions by this time was the "Howl" obscenity case, a landmark in the battle against literary censorship. Lawrence Ferlinghetti's City Lights bookshop had been prosecuted in 1958 for selling the volume containing the poem, but the following year a California state court found that the work could not be suppressed as obscene by the local police.

Ginsberg was among the team of inventors of the whole concept of "the Sixties". By the beginning of the decade, he had taken on the now-familiar appearance of psychedelic prophet which is how he is best remembered: long black curly hair, beard to match, and large sad eyes behind thick glasses. His energies were still funnelled into exercises in liberation, but it was a much more politicised spiel than before. Ginsberg sometimes talked as if America was a police state equivalent to the Soviet Union, and was apt to make pronouncements such as "To be a junkie in America is like having been a Jew in Nazi Germany", which are not saved from stupidity by the fact of his own Jewishness. He seldom wrote subtly about politics; his campaign style, rather, was to rant, or chant, in the hope of spreading awareness of what he considered to be America's crimes against the world at large. He is partly responsible for the conception, and proper marshalling, of an entire generation's protest against the war in Vietnam.

The FBI accumulated a huge file of mostly trivial information about Ginsberg's views and movements ("The Beat Generation is an accusation of the system", states one memo with



Psychedelic prophet: Ginsberg at Hyde Park in 1967. The FBI described him as an "entertainer" with a fuzzy beard who "chants unintelligible poems"

thudding insight, while another describes him as an "entertainer" with a fuzzy beard who "chants unintelligible poems"). Though profoundly indignant at the intrusion, Ginsberg delighted in taunting the organisation. When J. Edgar Hoover insidiously let it be known that the Bureau possessed photographs of Ginsberg in the nude with other men, perhaps scheming to blackmail him, Ginsberg asked for permission to use one of them on the cover of a book.

Ginsberg's exhibitionism was part of his character, but he understood its political usefulness, at this stage, in getting his message across, even though it might obscure his more thoughtful side. He was far more knowledgeable about poetry, ancient and modern, than he is often given credit for. Similarly, his political skills, often based on the obvious but practically inapplicable idea — war bad, peace good — sometimes entailed the

valuable knack of saying the unsayable. Talking about the troubled relations between blacks and Jews in America, for example, Ginsberg upset many of his own race by pointing out an "astonishing mirror image resemblance between Nazi theory of racial superiority and Jewish hang-up as chosen race... Any fixed categorisation of the Self is a big goof."

He was always willing to get himself arrested at a demonstration, believing that it could only help whatever cause was at stake. In 1965, he was thrown out of Cuba for a combination of offences against free speech and sexual mores, and in the same year was deported from Czechoslovakia. Students had elected him King of the May in Prague, but the intervention of a Party official, with the police behind him, prevented him being crowned and given the freedom — as if there was such a thing — of the city. A few days later, Ginsberg was beaten up

(ostensibly by anti-homosexual thugs) and put on a plane.

After *Kaddish* (1961), Ginsberg's poetry concerned itself more with politics and, as is usually the case when that happens, the quality suffered. "I see nothing but bombs" runs a line in one poem, and the weary reader might say, and when not bombs boys, and when not boys buddhist mantras. The volumes continued to come: *Planet News* (1968), *Plutonian Ode* (1968), *White Shroud* (1982), to name only some, and with them awards by the very establishment he had vehemently opposed. Ginsberg was oddly attached to his honours, which included membership of the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

He had a magpie nature which resulted in the accumulation of a vast Beat archive, now at Stanford University. There is a Ginsberg office in New York which will presumably continue to deal with his af-

fairs, such as requests for photographs (he was an enthusiastic photographer), and to administer the Committee on Poetry. This organisation absorbed the large fees which Ginsberg got for readings, and helped poets in need of rent or legal fees. Burroughs remained a life-long friend, but Kerouac, befuddled by drink, was lost after 1960, and was apt to hurl anti-semitic insults at his old colleague over the telephone.

Only a Communist Party apparatchik could fail to respond warmly to Allen Ginsberg in person. Dogged by ill-health in recent years, he was gentle and charming, and as generous with his time as anyone with such obligations could be. A few months ago, while in New York, I rang him for help in relation to a literary project. It was a Sunday morning and, still running on GMT, I had called unconsciously early. Ginsberg showed slight exasperation at first, then explained that he had

his meditation teacher with him, then threw off a list of helpful suggestions, ending with an invitation to join him at a party at the weekend.

Even his attackers were invited to commune with him in meditations as he described in one of his best late poems, "Mugging": "as I went down shouting Om Ah Hum to gangs of lovers on the stoop watching /... have they knives? Om Ah Hum."

Allen Ginsberg lived a life that could scarcely be surpassed for engagement and its twin, eventfulness. It takes a grand ego to live as he did, but he could be modest, too, as he showed in a summing-up he gave to his biographer Barry Miles, 10 years ago: "Perhaps the good outweighs the bad. I'll never know. Still I feel guilty I haven't done more."

James Campbell

Allen Ginsberg, poet: born Newark, New Jersey 3 June 1926; died New York 5 April 1997.

Professor Lyman Spitzer



Spitzer: the Hubble Space Telescope was his brainchild

Lyman Spitzer, astrophysicist, plasma physicist, and visionary, had an enormous influence through his own publications, his interactions with students and colleagues, and perhaps most of all through his enthusiastic but hard-headed advocacy of government-sponsored space astronomy and thermonuclear research. The Hubble Space Telescope, launched in 1990 and now feeding back its staggeringly detailed images, was essentially Spitzer's brainchild.

Spitzer was educated at Phillips Academy, in Andover, Maryland and at Yale University. He spent his first graduate year in Britain, as a Henry Fellow at Cambridge University. He records that the informal evening seminars given in Trinity College by S. Chandrasekhar were one major reason for his decision to work in astrophysics. Spitzer wrote his doctoral thesis at Princeton University with Henry Norris Russell as his adviser. His first position, as instructor in physics and astronomy at Yale from 1939, was interrupted by four years of war work at Columbia University, devoted largely to research in underwater sound.

His calibre was recognised in his appointment soon after as Russell's successor as Director of the Princeton University Observatory, a post he held from 1947 until his retirement. He and his colleague Martin Schwarzschild, whom he persuaded to join him, together built up a strong graduate teaching and research pro-

gramme primarily in theoretical astrophysics, but with considerable emphasis on observational astronomy also.

In an autobiographical essay "Dreams, Stars and Elections" published in the *Annual Review of Astronomy and Astrophysics* in 1989 and also the title of a volume of his selected writings, published this year — Spitzer gives as one of his long-term goals the wish to understand the formation of stars from the interstellar gas in our own and in other galaxies.

Over the decades, he and his collaborators studied in detail the physics of the interstellar gas and the associated dust and of the magnetic field permeating the gas. Of particular interest is the study of the tendency of dust grains to be aligned by the magnetic field, with an effect on starlight that was the first clue to the existence of a sizeable galactic magnetic field. He summarised his own work and that of others in a valuable text, *Physical Processes in the Interstellar Medium* (1978).

Already in 1946, Spitzer had written a paper pointing out the great advantages for astronomy of observations made from an orbiting space telescope, both through extending the accessible parts of the electromagnetic spectrum, and avoiding the inevitable distortions caused by the earth's atmosphere. The 1957 launch of the first Soviet sputnik gave an enormous impetus to the US space programme. With a contract from NASA, a group of Princeton scientists under Spitzer's chair-

manship explored both the possibilities of research on interstellar matter, through observation in the ultra-violet, and the engineering requirements for an astronomical satellite. Spitzer wrote that perhaps the high-point of his career was the day in 1972 when the ultra-violet spectrometer in the orbiting Copernicus satellite was switched on and immediately began operating as planned, so opening up a new chapter in the study of the interstellar gas. In its nine years of operation, the instrument yielded much information of major importance, confirming the theoretical prediction of giant clouds of molecular hydrogen, discovering regions in the galactic disk with a million-degree temperature and measuring the ratio of deuterium (an isotope of hydrogen) to normal hydrogen, of crucial importance for the Big Bang cosmological model.

But Spitzer's vision had already gone further; he dreamed of a general purpose telescope with a mirror in the three-metre class. Even after the doubts and hesitation of other astronomers had been assuaged, much diplomatic skill was needed before the go-ahead from Congress for the Hubble Space Telescope was gained in 1977. Spitzer was able to keep an eye on its subsequent development through his chairmanship of the overseeing committee of the Space Telescope Institute Council from 1981 until 1990, and took an active role in the telescope's refurbishment. He was delighted with the high quality

material on the interstellar medium being fed back, and in fact was analysing data right up to his sudden and unexpected death. Spitzer's long-term aim was a proper understanding of star formation, with its consequences for galactic evolution and cosmology — will surely come through a judicious combination of physical and dynamical theory with detailed observational material from the space telescopes of today and of the future.

Spitzer's studies on interstellar matter inevitably led to his probing the general properties of fully or partially ionized gases that carry the currents maintaining the galactic magnetic field. The theory of encounters between charged particles is quite similar to the analogous theory for gravitating bodies, such as stars and gas clouds. Spitzer and collaborators showed how energy interchange between stars in a globular cluster leads to the evolution of the cluster through slow but steady escape of the high-velocity stars, while simultaneously the more massive stars tend to sink towards the centre, a process that can lead to the collapse of the cloud core, perhaps to form a black hole. This whole area is treated with characteristic lucidity in another monograph, *Dynamical Evolution of Globular Clusters* (1987).

Another major problem to which Spitzer devoted much thought from early on is the search for an unlimited supply of cheap energy. In 1951, he per-

suaded the US Atomic Energy Commission to back the study of controlled thermonuclear fusion in hot, magnetically confined ionized gas ("plasma"). He had worked out a magnetic configuration — "the Stellarator concept" — which he hoped would effectively confine the gas long enough for hydrogen to fuse into helium, as occurs in stellar interiors. Project Matterhorn, which was carried out between 1953 and 1961, and evolved into the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory, became a world leader in this area, and a worthy competitor to the UK Atomic Energy Authority's Harwell and Culham laboratories.

Spitzer's strewed comments in *Nature* magazine on the 1959 Harwell "Zeta" experiments are well remembered. He was also quick to recognise the advantages of the Russian "tokamak" alternative. Princeton developed one of the world's most successful machines, making a step-by-step approach to the "break-even" conditions, at which fusion energy output begins to exceed the driving energy. Spitzer must have been saddened in his last days, knowing that Congress had taken the prima facie short-sighted step of cutting off the funds needed for the machine permanently as from this week. However, the physics and astrophysics worlds have as a permanent legacy the beautifully succinct tract *Physics of Fully Ionized Gases* (1956), based on material prepared for the original Princeton research group, from which generations

have learned the essentials of plasma physics.

Lyman Spitzer was both an outstanding scientist and a warm and lovable human being, with wide interests outside his specialities. The atmosphere in the Observatory under the joint leadership with Martin Schwarzschild combined high academic standards and enthusiasm with a courtesy that made work there a particular pleasure. He and his splendid wife Doreen were perfect hosts to the many visitors of all generations to Princeton.

Leon Mestel

Lyman Spitzer, physicist and astronomer: born Toledo, Ohio 26 June 1914; instructor in Physics and Astronomy, Yale University 1939-42; Scientist, Special Studies Group, Division of War Research, Columbia University 1942-46; Director, Sonar Analysis Group 1944-46; Associate Professor of Astrophysics, Yale University 1946-47; Chairman, Astrophysical Sciences Department and Director of Observatory, Princeton University 1947-79; Professor of Astronomy 1947-82 (Charles A. Young Professor 1952-53); Director, Project Matterhorn 1953-61; Chairman, Research Board 1967-72; President, American Astronomical Society 1959-61; NASA Medal 1972; Gold Medal, Royal Astronomical Society 1978; Chairman, Space Telescope Institute Council 1981-90; Foreign Member, Royal Society 1990; married 1940 Doreen D. Canaday (one son, three daughters); died Princeton, New Jersey 31 March 1997.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

BIRTHS

COLEMAN-TRAVIS: On 31 March, to Zoe and Jake, a daughter, Natasha Grace.

DEATHS

AKELLES: David, on 3 April, peacefully in hospital. A much loved friend. Cremated private on Friday 11 April, followed by a gathering at 5pm at his flat for friends who would like to remember and wish him well. Enquiries to N. Hadfield, 0171-735 3702. In lieu of flowers, donations if wished to the Woodland Trust.

Birthdays

Mr Dennis Amis, cricketer, 54; Miss Angela Bonaluck, golfer, 60; Miss Fredda Brilliant, sculptor, 89; Mr Francis Ford Coppola, film director and screenwriter, 58; Sir Geoffrey Cox, former chief executive, ITN, 87; Mr Luis Eumani, racehorse trainer, 48; Professor Sir Graeme Davies, Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Glasgow University, 60; Professor Donald Denman, land economist, 86; Mr Peter Fluck, puppet-maker and satirist, 50; Sir David Frost, television presenter, 58; Mr Frederick Garner, former chairman, Pearl Assurance, 77; Mr James Garner, actor, 69; Sir Terence Harrison, chief executive, Rolls Royce, 61; Vice-Admiral Sir Arthur Hackett, former submarine commander, 83; Mr Gordon Kaye, actor, 56; Mr Martin Lewis, broadcaster, 52; Mr

Cliff Morgan, former head of Outside Broadcasting, BBC Television, 67; Mr Ian Richardson, actor, 63; Mr Andrew Sachs, actor, 67; Mr Ravi Shankar, star player, 77; Group Captain May Shaw, former director and matron-in-chief, PMRAFNS, 64; Miss Alison Shubsole, former Principal, Homerton College, Cambridge, 72; Mr David J. Williams, chief constable, Surrey, 56; Sir Geoffrey Wilson, former chairman, the Race Relations Board, 87; Mr Mark Wolfson MP, 63.

Anniversaries

Births: St Francis Xavier, Jesuit missionary, 1506; Gerhard Duyn, painter, 1613; Dr Charles Burney, organist and historian of music, 1726; Domenico Dragonetti, double-bass

player and composer, 1763; William Wordsworth, poet, 1770; William Elmy Channing, Unitarian minister, 1780; Sir Francis Legatt Chantrey, sculptor, 1781; Hermann Bercius, flautist and composer, 1826; Gilbert Arthur A. Beckett, playwright and author, 1837; Franz Ries, violinist and music publisher, 1846; Edward Knoblock, playwright, 1874; Daisy (Margaret Mary Julia) Ashford, author, aged 9, of *The Young Vagabond*, 1881; Gabriela Mistral (Lucila Godoy Alcayaga), poet, 1889; Billie Holiday (Eleanora Fagan), jazz singer, 1915; Deanne Jean-Baptiste, Abbé de La Salle, founder of the Christian Brothers, 1719; Richard (Dick) Turpin, highwayman, hanged 1739; El Greco (Domenikos Theotokopoulos), painter, 1614; Anton Diabelli, music publisher and composer, 1838; Phineas Taylor Barnum, showman, 1891; Albert Venn Dicey, jurist, 1922; Henry Ford, motor manufacturer, 1947; Theda Bara (Theodosia Goodman), actress, 1955. On this day in France, the metre was made the official measuring unit of length, 1795; the Rev S. Smith and his wife were convicted of a murderous assault on John Leech, 1888; the Conference of Algiers, considering the ownership of Morocco, ended, 1906; the Canadian Grand Trunk Railway was completed, 1914; the first London production of the musical show *The Desert Song* was staged, 1927; President Niceto Alcalá Zamora of Spain was deposed, 1936; the World Health Organisation was formed as a specialised UN agency, 1948; Dog Hammarskjöld of Sweden was elected Secretary-General of

the United Nations, 1953; the Commonwealth was dissolved, 1956; Spain relinquished its protectorate over Morocco, 1956. Today the Feast Day of St Apollonia, St Celina or Cecilia of Armagh, St George the Younger, St Hegesippus, St Henry Walpole, St Herman Joseph and St John Baptist de La Salle.

Lectures

National Gallery: Hugh Brigstocke, "Some Thoughts on Poussin's Working Methods: versions, copies and imitations", 1pm. Victoria and Albert Museum: Doran Church, "Pugin: the V&A's collection in relationship to the Palace of Westminster's collection", 2.30pm. Graham College, London EC1: Professor John Pick, "Industry and

the Arts: the tyranny of charity. Patronage, Philanthropy and State Intervention", 1pm.

Appointments

Mr Stephen Brown, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Korea. Mr David Logan, to be Ambassador to the Republic of Turkey. Mr Malcolm Wilson, to be British High Commissioner to the Republic of Vanuatu. Mr Peter Robb, to be a full-time Chairman of Industrial Tribunals, assigned to the Bedford Region. Mrs Rosemary Mettling, to continue as HM Chief Inspector, Magistrates' Courts Service Inspectorate. The Prince of Wales, to be Patron of the Leonard Cheshire Foundation's Golden Jubilee.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Duke of Edinburgh opens the enhanced facilities at the Windsor Leisure Centre, Windsor, Berkshire. The Prince of Wales tours and then opens the new Gordon Highlanders Museum, Aberdeen, as President, the Prince's Scottish Youth Bursary Trust, reviews the work of the Grampian region of the trust, attends a civil reception at the Beach Ballroom, Aberdeen, to mark the occasion of the official opening of the magnificent ruins and opens the Prince Charles Cadet Training Centre, the Prince Charles Barracks, Aberdeen, and as Patron, the Aberfeldy Society, visits the Aberfeldy House, Forth, Aberdeenshire. The Duke of Gloucester, Patron, Harrogate of London Trust, visits Thorpe Coombe House, Thorpe Coombe, Harrogate, Yorkshire, visits the Queen's Hospital, London E17, visits the Circle Theatre, Caledonian Market, London N1, visits St Luke's Churchyard, London EC1, and attends a luncheon at St John St Paul's Museum, London WC2.

Changing of the Guard

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment escorts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11pm. 1st Battalion Scots Guards escorts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30pm, band provided by the Coldstream Guards.

0201 201 1050

Half-time figures should see United at the top of the City's league

Although the stock market's low affair with professional football has lost some of its intensity, most of the quoted clubs still enjoy the sort of glamour appeal which is the envy of more mundane but often more successful companies.

Tottenham Hotspur was the first club to brave the rigours of the market. It appeared in 1983 and for years its shares were firmly in the relegation zone. The arrival of Alan Sugar produced a more businesslike approach and with the City suddenly appreciating the wonders of football, Spurs has enjoyed a remarkable run in the market, if not on the pitch, over the past three years.

Manchester Utd, reporting half-time figures today, joined up in 1991 and after a quiet start also achieved a strong investment fan club, scoring handsome gains for its shareholder followers.

Today more than a dozen clubs grace the market, ranging

from premiership giants to second division hopefuls, little Preston North End. Other clubs are on their way. Bolton Wanderers is being transferred to Mosaic, a former printing inks business, now a shell vehicle for entrepreneur David Williams, and Aston Villa should arrive in the close season.

At the time of the Spurs and United flotations a club's investment appeal related mainly to the value of its stadium. Such a measurement was largely replaced when Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB started pouring millions of pounds into the game to obtain television coverage.

Clubs, big and small, have also become more conscious of their money-making ability, cashing in on a vast array of services, credit cards to insurance, and the sale of items from replica kits to badged bottles of wine.

Many clubs are also drawing more income from spectators

and there is always the prospect of one of the giants, such as United, starting its own television channel.

Whatever its television ambitions, this is an important week for the Manchester club. Besides kicking off on the financial front today it has a vital European Cup fixture on Wednesday. An outstanding display on the field could make a big contribution to the year's results; in the meantime the half-time figures should be top-of-the-league stuff.

Bruce Jones and Roy Owens at investment house Merrill Lynch are looking for profits of £15.5m before tax and transfer fees. Last year on a similar basis the club produced £8.9m. Around £28.5m is in sight for the year although a successful Euro Cup run could lift revenue.

Together with the rest of the market's football league United and Spurs have lost some of their glitter in the past few months as fears have arisen that



football shares may have run ahead of the game. The rerating has also been fuelled by doubts about the earnings capacity of some of

Share spotlight

the new arrivals. Sheffield Utd, Southern Leisure (Southampton) and Sunderland have suffered sharp falls from their peaks; Newcastle Utd's debut was, to say the least, restrained and poor old Charlton Athletic of the first division encountered what, in effect, was the market's sliding tackle.

If United provides the sporting appeal this week then Tesco offers the heavyweight content. Its interim figures should offer clues how the integration of

STOCK MARKET WEEK

DEREK PAIN

Stock market reporter of the year

then barged into banking. Last month it swept into Ireland, slashing out £600m for the country's largest food retailer, Quinnsworth.

The banking and Irish adventures will not have any impact on the figures due to be announced tomorrow. They cover a February end year. Even so, the market is clearly ready for some impressive numbers, with Tesco shares enjoying a 10 per cent premium to the food retailing sector. Around £750m, perhaps a few million more, is expected against last year's £680.7m.

Highland Distilleries, also on Tuesday, provides the week's alcoholic content. Its interim figures should offer clues how the integration of Macallan, the up-market malt whisky distiller swallowed after a hostile bid last year, is going.

The group, which has close corporate and trading links with the French Remy Cointreau drinks group, will cer-

tainly have suffered from the strength of sterling. NatWest Securities is looking for profits of £26m against £22.2m and believes the figures should mark a turning point for the shares which have underperformed for the past two years.

RJB Mining is another with a profits appointment tomorrow. In December the company's stockbroker, BZW, sent the shares crashing 23 per cent in a day to 372.5p when it lowered its profits forecast to £185m. The shares ended last week at 355p.

The broker was worried about the impact of cheap overseas imports on what has become Britain's King Coal, the successor to the old National Coal Board. BZW was also tough on the current year's estimate, cutting from £232m to £192m.

Others reporting this week include Burmah Castrol, Tarmac, Smiths Industries and RMC.

Burmah looks set to produce around £143m, up from £135m. Smiths Industries is likely to record a 15 per cent gain to £80m with the group firing on its aerospace and medical cylinders.

But building material groups Tarmac and RMC are, like so many in the industry, set to suffer profit falls.

Tarmac should be down around 38 per cent to £60m with demand for aggregates in this country improving in the second six months and, to some extent, cushioning the setback.

RMC could be nearly 20 per cent lower at £265m. Domestic profits should have been fairly robust but poor demand in Germany and currency considerations may have taken their toll. Still RMC, unlike Tarmac, should offer a modestly improved return for shareholders. It is expected to lift its dividend 4 per cent to 26.25p while Tarmac's payment will stay at 5.5p.

Others reporting this week include Burmah Castrol, Tarmac, Smiths Industries and RMC.

Share Price Data

These are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items. Other details: Ex rights = Ex-dividend; Ex all = United Securities Market's Suspended Up Party Paid pm All Paid Shares; A All Stock. Source: FT Information.

The Independent Index

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Index	Code	Index	Code
FTSE 100 - Real-time	01	Starting Point	04
UK Stock Market Report	02	Bullion Report	05
UK Company News	03	Wall St Report	06
Foreign Exchange	04	Tokyo Market	07

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Interest Rates

UK	Germany	US	Japan
Base	6.00%	Discount	5.75%
Prime	Discount	5.00%	Discount
3-month	3.5%	Fed Funds	5.25%
Italy	Prime	Spain	3.00%
Discount	7.5%	10-day Repo	5.75%
Netherlands	Discount	Sweden	Discount
Advances	2.70%	Repo (ave)	4.0%

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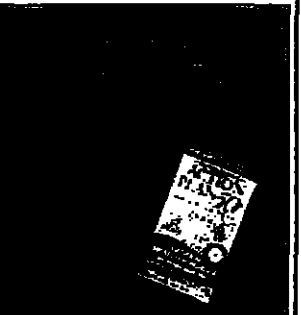
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THE INDEPENDENT

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Tobacco giant goes on trial in US

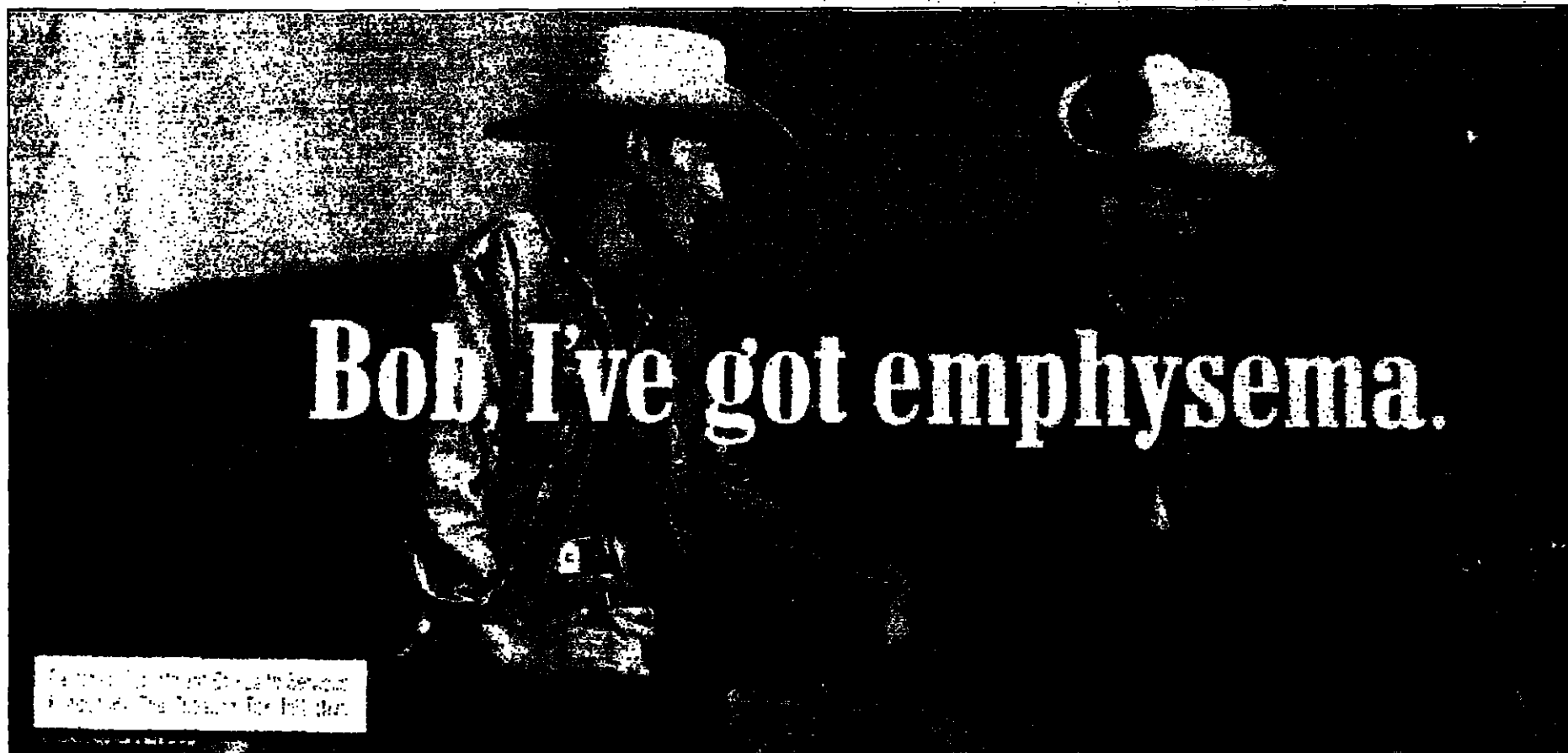
David Usborne
New York

The tobacco industry is bracing itself for the start in a Florida courtroom today of a lawsuit brought by the estate of a dead smoker against RJ Reynolds, America's number two cigarette manufacturer, that promises to visit more turmoil on the sector and further batter stocks on both sides of the Atlantic.

The jury will hear the story of Jean Connor, who started smoking at the age of 15 and died of lung cancer in 1995 at 49. The area of contention is simple: is RJ Reynolds responsible for the habit that killed his daughter and did it knowingly withhold from her information about the risks of smoking?

Anxiety is running especially high ahead of the case. It represents the first of a whole queue of lawsuits that are set for trial this year. It also comes in the wake of last month's startling confession by the Liggett Group, the smallest of the US tobacco companies, that smoking is indeed potentially lethal and that the company had been deliberately marketing cigarettes to minors.

Most important, however, is the identity of the lawyer who will represent the estate of Ms Connor. He is Norwood "Woody" Wilner, a flamboyant Florida trial lawyer who last August won \$750,000 (£459,000) in damages for an ex-smoker and his wife against Brown & Williamson, the US subsidiary



Welcome to health-department country: California has launched a \$22m anti-smoking advertising blitz as the cigarette debate in the US becomes more heated

of London-based British American Tobacco (BAT).

Mr Wilner's success last time round stunned an industry which in 40 years has never had to pay

a cent of damages. Tobacco stocks reeled on the decision. He will be arguing for the Connor estate in the same small courtroom in Jacksonville, Florida.

In several regards, Mr Wilner may have a harder job with this case. Last time, his client's cancer had gone into remission and he was able to tell his own story

in person to the jury. Now, Mr Wilner has only a video tape made by Ms Connor before her death.

The Liggett action may also

have only limited bearing on the case. In reaching a settlement with 22 US states that are suing the industry to recover \$30bn in

smoking-related ailments, Liggett agreed to hand over industry documents to assist in the pursuit of the other companies. Those documents are ex-

pected to contain embarrassing and incriminating information. But Mr Wilner will not be able to use these papers. Even so, the bad publicity—from the perspective of the tobacco industry—generated by Liggett's confessions is likely to assist Mr Wilner with the jury.

Mr Wilner's fame for anti-tobacco polemics in the courtroom almost guarantees that the proceedings themselves—even before the final judgment is read—are likely to bring further harm to the cigarette companies. Arguments are likely to start in a few days, once jury selection is completed, and the whole trial is expected to wrap up before the end of the month.

Meanwhile, an anti-smoking group is to announce a national advertising campaign today to put pressure on the US Congress to hold new hearings into the tobacco companies. It wants to highlight the testimony of company executives to Congress in 1993 when they said, under oath, that cigarettes were not addictive.

California, in the meantime, has unveiled a \$22m anti-smoking advertising blitz.

One radio spot aims to ridicule teenagers who smoke. "Your ignorance is astounding, and should be applauded," a male voice intones.

"We, the tobacco conglomerates of America, owe a debt of gratitude to all teens for their continued support of our products despite the unfortunate disease and death they cause."

Channel 5 close to satellite deal with Astra

Clifford German

Channel Five, the fifth terrestrial TV channel, which was launched last week, is planning a deal with the Astra satellite system which would give it access to an extra 2 million viewers.

Channel Five can currently reach only about 50 per cent of the UK population and large parts of the country, especially south of London, parts of East Anglia, Wales and the north of Scotland, are unable to receive the signal.

Another 15-20 per cent of the population will need adjustments or extensions to be able to receive pictures of a watchable quality. An extra 2 million viewers would give Channel Five a further 10 per cent of the potential national television viewing audience.

The satellite-based service from Channel Five would be accessible free of charge to all the 4 million UK households which have a satellite dish, about half of which will already be able to access Channel Five. Channel Five would be expected to pay around £4m a year for the service, which has to be set against the extra advertising revenue it could secure by increasing its accessibility.

Astra has agreed to make transponder space available on one of its satellites to the Pearson group, which is a shareholder in Thames, which in turn owns a 7 per cent stake in Société Européenne de Satellites, the Luxembourg-based company which owns the Astra satellites.

Pearson has already agreed to take the space at an annual rental of £3.9m. It is also one of the four controlling shareholders in Channel Five and would, in turn, make the space available to Channel Five at a commercial rate.

Channel Five is currently assessing just how many

potential extra viewers the satellite would bring in, and how many of them would translate into actual viewers based on its current response. If it decides the extra cost is unjustified Pearson is expected to sell the space on to a German television channel.

Channel Five's chief executive officer, David Elstein, is known to be keen to add satellite and cable capability, however, and on the basis of the early audience figures he is expected to sign the deal with Astra this week.

Channel Five had earlier started talks with Rupert Murdoch's BSkyB satellite channel to provide access for Channel Five, but this is not now proceeding.

The extra cost of enlarging the potential audience will add to the programming costs, which are now running around £110m a year, and the £22m licence fee payable to the Government.

Returning an estimated 10 million video recorders to prevent interference from the new channel is expected to cost Channel Five up to £100m, compared with the initial estimate of £55m.

But Channel Five claims to have reached 6.2 per cent of the national TV audience on the opening day, and has fluctuated around 4 per cent of the audience since. It hopes to capture 5 per cent of the national audience after the first year, which would put it roughly equal with the Sky satellite audience.

The new channel has been welcomed by advertisers who hope the extra competition will help down advertising charges, which have risen by almost 50 per cent over the past five years. Channel Five's advertising has brought in £10m for the first month alone and revenues are expected to reach £60-70m in the first 12 months.

Engineers' pay settlements restrained

Chris Hughes

Engineering pay is bucking the trend towards higher earnings, according to a report released today. But the figures drew a sceptical reaction from industry observers.

According to the Engineering Employers' Federation, pay settlements in January were up 3.05 per cent on last year. Since July 1995, settlements have fluctuated around 3.5 per cent, while earnings rises in the economy as a whole have shot up to 5 per cent.

"Employers are maintaining their sensible attitude towards settlements in a time of economic uncertainty," said David Yeandle, head of employment affairs at EEF.

Not all analysts were convinced. "Engineers have seen extra money even though the level of settlements doesn't seem high," said one incomes expert. "The trend has been to keep basic pay increases down and to give more money to employees in other ways, such as bonuses and profit-related pay."

The EEF's report excludes

these additions, although they lift take-home pay.

Alan Armitage, EEF's head of economics, said the strong pound's effect on exports did not explain engineering pay restraint since it could take 18 months for orders to reach completion.

Out of 407 pay settlements analysed by the EEF, 303 were 3 per cent or over.

In a survey of members of the Institute of Electrical Engineers, salaries of under 35s were up 3.5 per cent over the past year. Ken Smith, manager

for professional development, said higher grades had suffered from delayering.

Research by the Institute of Civil Engineers is understood to have found that civil engineering, traditionally in the bottom half of the engineering earnings table, is on the verge of a recruitment drive following a growth in orders.

Mark Stracey, group manager of Thomas Telford, the endorsed recruitment agency of the chemical and civil engineering industries, said outsourcing was responsible for wage inflation in

consulting and contracting engineering. "Pressure from City institutions has forced larger petrochemical companies to reduce strata of management and increase per-capita profitability by contracting out."

Bechtel, the general engineering group, recently gave all employees a bonus of up to 10 per cent to reflect exceptional company performance last year, and a shortage of calibre graduate engineers has forced British Aerospace to consider setting up its own university.

However, Peter Breen, part-

ner in the executive search company Heidrick & Struggles, said EEF's figures were a good snapshot of an industry saturated with qualified engineers and starved of business-minded management talent.

"There's an oversupply of trained blue-collar engineers, but business-alert engineers are a rare breed. Finding an engineer with an MBA in Europe is like finding a hen with teeth. Most engineers are doing what they do because they consider it an intrinsically interesting job."

Pace of economic growth 'truly worrying'

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

The pace of economic growth is significantly faster than official figures suggest, according to new City research due to be published this week. Correcting for the fact that the first estimates of national income during an economic upswing are subsequently revised up suggests the actual growth rate is "truly worrying".

The research, by economist Michael Dicks at investment bank Lehman Brothers, points

out that figures published by government statisticians at the time showed the economy growing at around its trend rate during the late 1980s boom.

In fact, the early-1986 estimates pointed to a slowdown, in what the then chancellor Nigel Lawson has since described as a "false dusk".

This pattern of underestimating growth continued throughout the boom. Mr Dicks said. "Interestingly, at the beginning of this year, the 1990s recovery looks to have reached the foothills of a real boom, if

the 1980s experience is anything to go by."

He said a late-1990s boom was unlikely to be on the same scale as the last decade's, mainly because of the strong pound and the more efficient jobs market. These mean that inflationary pressures from both import prices and pay rises are likely to stay more subdued.

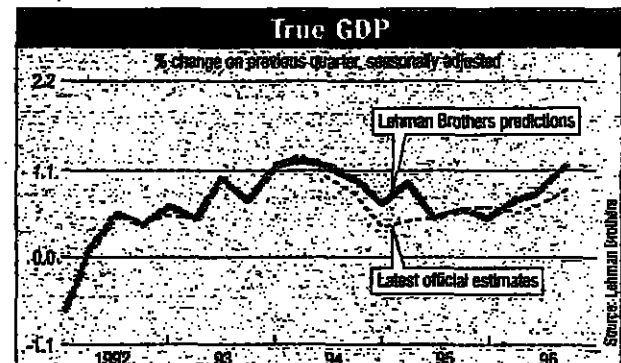
However, the probability that the economy is already growing at a rate well above its long-term potential means there is a real risk of inflation pressures.

Official statisticians have in-

vestigated the reasons for their tendency to underestimate growth in the late 1980s and reckon the bias has been eliminated.

But Mr Dicks argues that if initial estimates of Gross Domestic Product are compared with those made six months and three years later, there is strong evidence that this key measure of economic growth is very often revised up. The size of the revisions is greater when the economy is expanding rapidly.

The initial Office for National Statistics figure for growth in



1994 was 3.4 per cent, which it has revised up to 4.2 per cent. A final figure of 4.6 per cent is likely, according to the Lehman Brothers report, while 1995's

initial 2 per cent figure could turn out as high as 3 per cent, and 1996's official 2.6 per cent within-year growth will turn out to be 3.2 per cent or more.

More gas price cuts in pipeline

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

Independent gas suppliers are to step up their fight against controversial selective price cuts implemented by British Gas after an unexpectedly large number of households deserted the company in the latest trial of domestic competition in the South-east of England.

The furore began last month when British Gas announced it would cut bills for customers in the first competitive trial area, in Devon, Cornwall and Somerset, by between 6 and 12 per cent. It was the first time for decades

that homes in one region have enjoyed bills lower than the national tariff from British Gas.

Centrica, the recently demerged British Gas supply business, which continues to use the familiar brand name, made the move in the South-west after losing a fifth of its customer base to rivals. Since the trial began last May more than 100,000 homes have switched supplier out of 500,000 taking part.

However, the latest internal industry figures make even more worrying reading for Centrica executives. They show customers have deserted British Gas far more swiftly in the

most recent trial region involving just over 900,000 homes in Kent and Sussex. Since the trial began a month ago, 182,000 customers have either switched, or are thought to be in the process of switching, slashing British Gas's market share by 20 per cent. These statistics are well above figures released by Ofgas, the industry watchdog, which do not include homes which have signed contracts to move but have not yet done so.

Independent suppliers now believe British Gas is planning an early roll-out of its selective price reductions, known as "Value Plus", in Kent and Sus-

sex if Ofgas approves the new tariff packages on offer in the South-west. Ofgas is likely to decide whether to ban the price cuts within the next three weeks, after receiving strongly worded objections from independent gas companies. Most argue the reductions would crush competition before it gains a strong foothold.

Alan Liss, the managing director of Beacon Gas, argued that if British Gas was given the go-ahead, it should have to make customers sign a new contract. In the South-west consumers can move to the new tariff over the phone.

IN BRIEF

• The united front of the Co-operative Wholesale Society board against the threatened break-up bid by Andrew Regan's Lanica Trust may have cracked with the departure of one of the five-man executive team. John Owen will step down as controller CWS regions and specialist retail at the ACIM on 17 May. CWS chief executive Graham Melmoth denied reports that Mr Owen's departure was part of a witch-hunt against executives who had been willing to talk to Mr Regan. Mr Owen was a candidate for chief executive last year.

• Neil Pykett, former managing director of Cowie Financial Holdings, has resigned. An emergency general meeting at Cowie Group, the Sunderland-based car distributors, was due to discuss on Wednesday whether to dismiss Mr Pykett. He had intended to challenge allegations of misconduct at the meeting. In his letter to chairman Sir James McKinnon he is reported to have said he would pursue his claim of unfair dismissal as an executive through the courts. He is expected to claim compensation of more than £1m for his three-year contract.

• Spain has overtaken Britain to have the least pessimistic managers, according to a survey of small and medium-sized enterprises in Britain, France, Spain, Germany and Italy by 3i. Managers in Spain and Britain are less pessimistic than their European colleagues about their economies and more optimistic about the commercial environment than they were six months ago. However, managers are much more worried about competition than they were previously. The twice yearly survey asked managers about their expectations both for the economic climate beyond their control and for their own companies.


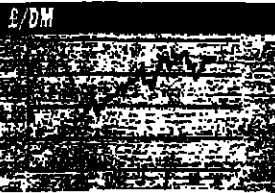
• Rental values for out-of-town retail warehouse investments have seen a dramatic increase, according to the latest Richard Ellis Monthly Index, based on valuations of 430 properties. In March, the index showed a rental increase of 3.5 per cent, bringing the total increase in retail warehouse rents for the full year to 8 per cent. Capital growth in the sector was 9.7 per cent for the year. Rents of in-town high street shops increased by just 0.2 per cent in March, and by just 3 per cent for the year.

• RJB Mining has won an 18-month extension of its subscription agreement with CIM Resources, the Australian coal mining business. RJB is to have the right to subscribe AS11.3m for a further 110 million shares until December 1998. It can also increase its stake to 43 per cent. It will not take any other direct interests in the Australian coal industry during this period. RJB first bought into CIM last May, when CIM placed 12.5 per cent of its issued capital.

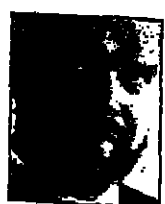
STOCK MARKETS									
FTSE 100									
Index	Close	Week's chg	Change (%)	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	Yield (%)			
FTSE 100	4236.50	-78.3	-1.8	4444.30	4056.60	3.61			
FTSE 250	4914.80	-61.4	-1.2	4729.40	4469.40	3.55			
FTSE 350	2082.30	-38.7	-1.9	2194.50	2012.80	3.75			
FTSE SmallCap	2282.30	-31.4	-1.4	2374.20	2178.20	3.94			
FTSE All-Share	2084.87	-34.7	-1.7	2163.94	1989.78	3.70			
New York	6439.21	-301.4	-4.5	7085.16	5032.94	1.89			
Daily	17880.59	-349.8	-1.9	22666.80	17303.65	0.87			
Hong Kong	12204.59	-328.7	-2.6	13868.24	12055.17	3.46			
Frankfurt	3244.93	-184.1	-5.4	3480.64	2848.77	1.69			

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES									
UK interest rates									
Index	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	5 Year	10 Year	30 Year
UK	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
US	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50
Japan	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
Germany	3.18	3.18	3.18	3.18	3.18	3.18	3.18	3.18	3.18
Bond Yields									
Index	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	5 Year	10 Year	30 Year
UK	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00
US	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50	5.50
Japan	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
Germany	3.18	3.18	3.18	3.18	3.18	3.18	3.18	3.18	3.18
MAIN PRICE CHANGES									
Index	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year	5 Year	10 Year	30 Year
Primer Oil	40	4.5	12.7	13.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5
Senior Equipment	131	13.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5
Hewlett-Packard	147.5	15	11.3	11.3	11.3	11.3	11.3	11.3	11.3

CURRENCIES									
\$/£					£/DM				
									
Pound vs.					Dollar vs.				
	Close	Week's chg	Yr Ago			Close	Week's chg	Yr Ago	
\$ (London)	1.5403	+1.03c	1.5222		\$ (London)	0.6090	-0.39	0.6569	
\$ (New York)	1.5345	-0.45c	1.5235		\$ (New York)	0.6118	+0.37	0.6564	
DM (London)	2.7488	+1.45p	2.7443		DM (London)	1.6758	-0.17p	1.4758	
¥ (London)	203.819	+2.07p	197.721		¥ (London)	124.135	+10.48p	108.245	
₹ (London)	38.6	+0.6	38.2		₹ (London)	104.3	+0.3	95.7	
OTHER INDICATORS									
	Close	Week's chg	Yr Ago		Index	Latest	Yr Ago	Real Price	
Oil Brent	17.59	-1.16	-20.2%		RPI	155.0	2.7148%	18 Apr	
Gold	347.35	-3.3	-0.95%		GDP	108.7	+2.8pct	107.0	25 Apr

Spel's in 1997



GAVYN DAVIES

The UK economy scores above average on openness to trade, finance, market flexibility and judicial institutions. But we score below average on government, infrastructure, technology and the labour force

UK slowly slips down economic league tables

The performance of the British economy is routinely accorded centre stage in any election campaign, but hardly ever do the protagonists land a knock-out punch. The complex nature of economics means that it is always possible for both sides to select variables, or time periods, which show that the other lot could not manage the proverbial celebration in a brewery, at least when compared to some foreign country, or to this country over some appropriate previous period. Sensible electors probably regard this as so much noise, and go about their daily business without further ado.

However, for those genuinely interested in our national performance, I recommend Britain's *Relative Economic Decline, 1870-1995*, the latest work of Professor Nicholas Crafts of the London School of Economics, published by the Social Market Foundation. Professor Crafts, as usual, assesses the evidence in the most neutral way possible (which perhaps just means that I share his prejudices), and provides a series of broad judgments, based on a mass of data, rather than selecting a few convenient comparisons which happen to support his viewpoint.

The conclusion, according to Professor Crafts, is that Britain has been in relative economic decline at least since 1870. At that time, real GDP per head in this country was the second highest in the world. This slipped to 11th in 1979, and to 17th in 1994, which suggests that the Tory years have not significantly arrested the speed of relative decline. However, there are some caveats which are worth noting.

First, economic theory suggests that we should take account of changes in hours worked, since an economy which is opting for more leisure time might be providing higher levels of overall welfare, even if these are not apparent in GDP statistics. (In other words, leisure has a positive value, which is

unrecorded in the national accounts.) This does indeed appear to be true of the UK, which does rather better when allowance is made of the decline in the average working week. On this basis, we appear to have maintained the 11th place in the world which we acquired in the 1970s, though some people might retort that they would like to work longer hours if that option were available.

The second caveat is that some of the economies which have overtaken the UK since 1979 in terms of GDP per head are not directly comparable with us, such as Hong Kong and Singapore. Relative to the comparable economies of western Europe, we seem to have done less badly, though there are still some examples, like Italy and Belgium, of countries which have overhauled us since 1979. Relative to Europe, we seem to have lost rather more ground in the "golden" period from 1950-73 than we have done since,

but even so there seems little support for the claim that the UK has been "the strongest economy in Europe" during the latest Conservative era.

The final caveat concerns the distribution of income. Many economists would argue that it is insufficient just to examine the behaviour of average income per head, since the extra welfare derived from each additional unit of income declines as one gets richer. Consequently, the overall welfare of the nation might actually go down if the distribution of income becomes more uneven. More uneven it has certainly become since 1979, and by a much greater margin than in the rest of Europe. So this would be another point suggesting that the relative performance of the UK since 1979 has been far from impressive.

More important than this, however, is the future. Relative performance in the past two

or three years has been good. Does this suggest that the Tory reforms are finally working, so that the UK economy will grow rapidly from now on? For an answer to this question, we can turn to *The Global Competitiveness Report, 1996*, produced by the World Economic Forum (WEF). This is a painstaking attempt, undertaken each year, to rank around 50 important countries according to their medium-term growth potential.

The methodology is as follows. Recent economic research has pointed to a series of underlying economic determinants of economic growth, and the WEF concentrates on eight main categories. Four of these – openness to international trade, the stance of government, the sophistication of financial markets, and the flexibility/skill content of labour markets – can be measured by published quantitative data.

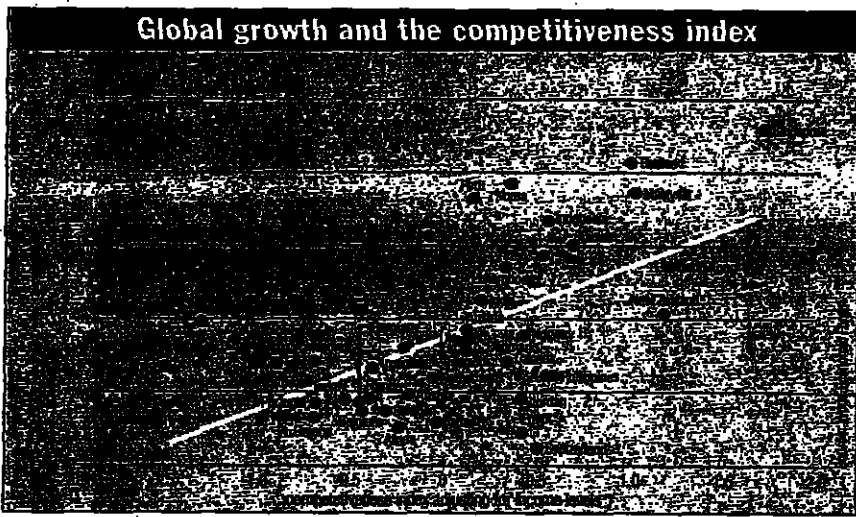
The other four – the quality of infrastructure, technology, management and the judicial process – are not subject to standard economic measurement, so the WEF has conducted a survey of more than 2,000 businessmen in the countries concerned in order to rank performance. All eight of the different inputs to growth potential are then given weights according to their importance for growth, and a competitiveness index is produced. (The potential for poorer countries to catch up with richer countries is also included in the calculation.)

The resulting competitiveness index is shown in the graph, and is plotted against actual growth performance in the years 1992-95 to check that it works. It is obvious that there is indeed a broad correspondence between GDP growth and the index; countries above the line have been growing somewhat faster than the index would suggest, while those below the line are doing the opposite.

What does this imply about the UK? First, the UK is in 24th position in the global league table, which is almost halfway down. This is not encouraging. However, on a more upbeat note, most of the countries above the UK are emerging economies which are not directly comparable with us. If we take broadly comparable developed economies, the UK's relative performance looks quite respectable. We are behind countries like the US (14th), Norway (18th), Canada (19th), Australia (22nd) and Denmark (23rd), but we are ahead of Japan (27th), France (38th), Germany (40th), and Italy (47th). We are also ahead of most of the other countries in the EU – it is interesting to note the whole of the EU is lagging behind the Anglo-Saxon economies according to the competitiveness index.

If the index is right, then the UK should grow relatively rapidly by European standards in the next five to 10 years. But before the government runs off with too much of the credit for this, we should take a closer look at the components of the index. Where do we score well, and where do we score badly? Compared to our overall ranking, we score above average on openness to trade, finance, market flexibility and judicial institutions, and that is the main reason for doing well overall. But we score below average on government (especially fiscal policy and savings), on infrastructure, on technology (especially technical skills), and on the labour force (especially education standards).

Where does all this leave us? The UK's performance since 1979 has been about average for a European country, but the competitiveness index suggests we may do better in the next five years. It also suggests that we could do even better still if we paid more attention to investment, infrastructure, education and skills. If we could find a way of adding these extra elements to the reforms the Tories have already achieved, that may be the right way forward.



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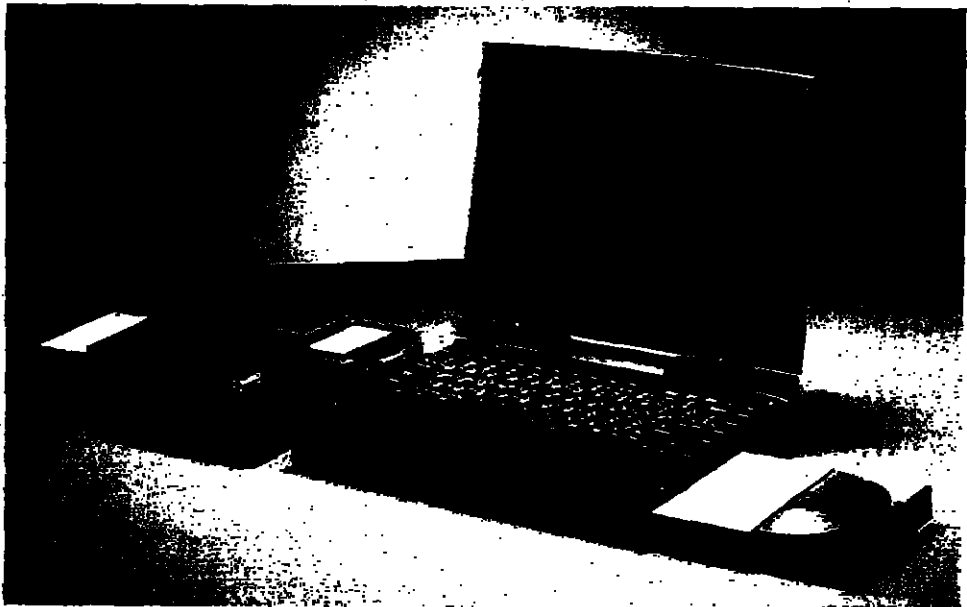
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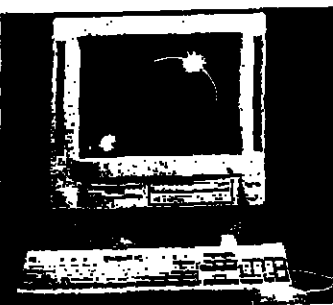
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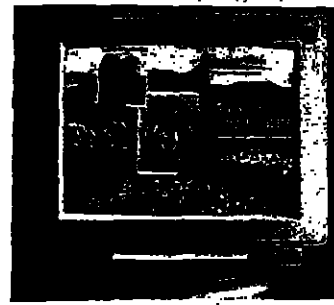
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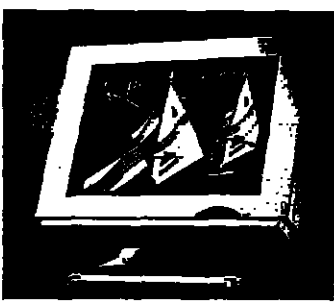
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back page: the week starts here

IN THE
INDEPENDENT
THIS WEEK

ART
Lawrence Alma-Tadema
Tom Lubbock on his antique visions



THEATRE
Britain's new writers
David Edgar finds talent



TV
Anthony La Paglia
Brian Viner meets the *Murder One* star



POP
Luscious Jackson
Sweet talk with Emma Forrest

WHERE TO GO, WHAT TO SEE, WHAT TO DO

Celluloid circus

Photography: An exhibition of circus photographs by Peter Lavery, better known for his work on Marlboro and Castlemaine XXXX ads, opens in Bush on Thursday. His work depicts the everyday canyons, sawdust and rope-filled life of the circus performer and, according to Bruce Bernard, formerly picture editor of the *Sunday Times*, a curious "beauty, magnetism and poignancy". The Octagon Galleries, Milsom Street. Ends 1 June. 9:30-5:30; £2.50, concs £1.75

Stand-up, lad

Comedy: David Baddiel begins a nationwide tour at Cliffs Pavilion, Southend, on Thursday, returning to his spiritual home of stand-up from which he signed off with his partner Rob Newman at Wembley Arena in 1993. The TLS has called him, apropos one of his books "the lyrical side of laddism". 8pm; £10/12; 01702 351135

Food of love

Auction: Lovers of romance should head to Sotheby's on Thursday for an auction of letters by Miss Beeton. The author of *The Book of Household Management* also penned "I wish at this moment I could breathe into your ears, closely and caressingly" to "dear" Samuel Beeton. New Bond St. 2:30pm; 0171 493 0800

Beast at best

Dance: "Whether man or beast, I could not tell ... I could see a white face and red, gleaming eyes ..." (Bram Stoker, *Dracula*). In the centenary year of the novel's publication Northern Ballet Theatre take their performing arts version of the gothic melo-horror-drama to Northern Ireland for the first time. Our critic called it "total theatrical experience ... an orgasmic bit of blood-letting". Waterfront Hall, Belfast, 8-12th; 01232 334455. 7:45pm/mats 10th, 12th 2pm; £10-25, mats £10

More Dance: While La Bayadère is closing at Covent Garden (returns only), danced by the trio of Doreen Bussell, Igor Zelensky and Zenaïda Yanowsky (10th), another ballet with a Russian theme, Anastasia, is opening tonight. An exotic piece of high Victorianism is exchanged for the lighter choreography of Kenneth MacMillan. The part of Anastasia in the first performance is danced by Leanne Benjamin. £2-£46.50; Mon 7pm, Wed/Sat 7:30pm

Monster bash

Classical: The violinist Nigel Kennedy makes a widely-hyped comeback on Thursday after five years of relative quiet - apart from his CD *Kafka* which flopped last year. Programme to include improvisations from Bartok to Hendrix. Royal Festival Hall; 7:30pm; £8-30; 0171 960 4242

Wallace & Stage-it

Theatre: Wallace & Gromit take to the stage, brought there by Andrew Dawson, the man who adapted and toured

magnificently with Thunderbirds a couple of years ago. Multi-faceted gadgets and "cracking toast, Gromit" brought to life. Churchill Theatre, Bromley. Starts Thursday. Ends 19th April. Mon-Thur 7:45pm £10-14, Fri/Sat 6pm £10/9pm £11-15. Child £2 off, concs £2 off Sat 8pm only.

Role reversal

Theatre: Kenneth Tynan's statement "a critic is a man who knows the way but can't drive the car" is finally put to the test. Tomorrow, and until 27 April in *The Critics - Up for Review* critics and theatre directors swap roles. Michael Billington of *The Guardian* changes with Adrian Noble, Nicholas de Jongh from the *Evening Standard* with Stephen Daldry, Jeremy Kingston (*The Times*) with Sir Peter Hall and James Christopher (*Time Out* freelance) with Dominic Dromgole. Battersea Arts Centre, Lavender Hill Tue-Sun 7:30-8:30pm/Sun; £9 concs £5, Tue/Sun 11-18 pay what you can; 0171 223 2223

Blue brother

Book: The author Hanif Kureishi has an aggressively contemporary, funny new collection of short stories, *Love in a Blue Time* out today. One of the collection, "My Son the Fanatic", has been serialised in the *New Yorker* and is in production as a feature film. Faber & Faber paperback £8.99

Techno tour

Pop: The Chemical Brothers begin a short tour on Wednesday, with another number one in "Block Rockin' Beats", an epic, wonderfully abrasive and apt techno follow-up to "Setting Sun". Manchester Apollo 10th 8pm; £11 (0161 242 2560) and Southend Cliff Pavilion 11th 7:30pm; £11 (01702 351135) are the ones not sold out so far. Ends 19th.

Atomic Blast

Clubbing: The club Atomic Model has found a new home at the newly revamped Leopard Lounge where you can rub shoulders with the rich and famous (if suitably attired) and walk down a specially installed catwalk through the Guccified Chelsea masses. The Broadway, Fulham Rd 10pm-3:30am; £10; 0171 385 0834

Free style

Jazz: The stylish, sexy Chicago tenor sax Chico Freeman is playing for two weeks at Ronnie Scott's from Monday with a post-John Coltrane combination of free-jazz style. "Absolutely great" according to our critic. 10:45pm £15; 0171 439 0747

For walkers ...

Sport: On Sunday it's the Flora London Marathon with a field of 27,000 expected. For non-runners there is jazz in Docklands at the City Pride pub, a multi-balloon launch by Radio 5 at the Cutty Sark, and a live gig with Capital Radio at Tower Hill. Runners start coming through there at 10am and looping through again at 11. Start 9am, (men 9:30am).



Like other citizens, I have spent some of the week worrying about the constituency of Tattion where the Labour candidate announced that he would stand down in favour of a "man of probity", which the Lib Dem man thought a good idea and would emulate. The egregious Neil Hamilton, who is alleged to have committed financial improprieties and eaten unwisely, though well, at the Paris Ritz, is sitting on a substantial majority - but one the other parties put together might overturn; this is especially likely if the sitting member's support diminishes and he goes on holding hands with Mrs Hamilton each time the television cameras roll.

Thirty years ago an anti-sleaze candidate would not have been hard to find, for the list of the great and the good contained names of copper-bottomed blamelessness. No more.

There are whole swathes of words which have become suspect: bachelor, churchman, scoutmaster, lawyer, inherited wealth, property developer, publisher, weatherman, agony aunt, Catholic, Lottery winner: "celibate" raises more questions than it answers: "virgin" is not to be entertained.

The number of professions that retain a consistently honourable image is diminishing even as the information required about the private life of a candidate increases with every scandal. I imagine the successful Tattion candidate will be a veterinarian widower who took early retirement to look after a widowed father; he will have one handicapped son and a married daughter in New Zealand. Age 56.

Hobbies: home brewing and badminton; educated in Scotland. Clubs: none.

His campaign will consist of a number of meetings at which he will be flanked by supporters of total integrity while constituents are invited to question his blamelessness: "Have you ever made a quick buck?" would of course be meant in the financial sense. A vote by him for any party during the last three elections will be treated with suspicion.

Can Tattion afford to be without an MP who twice weekly tables his question asking the Prime Minister to list his engagements? What we call "a working MP".

As George Walden rightly said when tendering his resignation to the Conservative Association of Buckingham: "There are too many members in the

House; being an MP is about as useful as a flat cap in a submarine." It was not until I met Walden some months after reading his sphinx-like statement that I discovered he had meant to say: "A cat flap in a submarine."

Getting rid of Blameless of Tattion MP might not be simple: application for The Children Hundreds has about it an element of impropriety and the House of Lords is not for the recently arrived. He might have to hang on in there "to show what everybody might/become by simply doing right", to quote the Liberal MP for East Salford (1906-1940) who did not much like the House of Commons.

MY
WEEKCLEMENT
FREUD

There are whole swathes of words which have become suspect: bachelor, churchman, scoutmaster, lawyer, inherited wealth, property developer, publisher, weatherman ...

paper to which I had looked forward but a card from an escort agency called La Femme, whose motto is "24 hour service; it is never too late to give us a ring." They did not state for whom it is never too late.

If I were the sponsor of a prestigious race and the broadcasters of the air and the backs of the earth intoned and wrote my company's name before each rendering of "Grand National", I would deposit the odd bottle of my product behind the press bar or give flasks to members of the media not too proud to accept hospitality.

As a result of Liverpool's three-day festival, I have decided to put Hennessy in my black coffee, Delamain into my hip flask, flare my bananas in Remy Martin, fry crepe Suzette in Courvoisier and drink Hine with my coffee.

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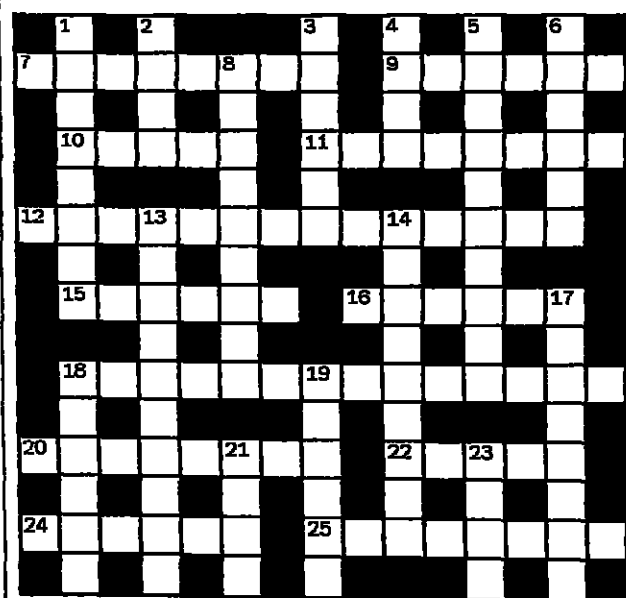
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THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3266, Monday 7 April

By Portia



ACROSS

7 Dark redhead has on round brimmed hat (8)
9 Notes route follows line of latitude (6)
10 He sings note out loud (5)
11 Original issue from Northern engineer of renown (8)
12 Get wind of financial difficulties? (4,3,7)

15 Dream-like state Proust created (6)
16 Physically relaxed after a drink (6)
18 Hard-line commander coming in doesn't augur well (14)
20 Slippery slope? (3,5)
22 Relatively small number order fish (5)

24 No-holds-barred quarrel when fellow's excluded (3,3)
25 French girl's from Armenian organisation (8)

DOWN

1 Keep in place of lock (8)
2 Ring contracting company in Scotland (4)
3 Sound out a French composer (6)
4 Took off outlet pipe, we're told (4)
5 People possessing extensive property (10)
6 Warning about quarter going in tax (6)
8 Ground bait? (9)
13 Consult an eccentric about English town (10)
14 Change round period instrument (9)
17 Certainty of being shown a natural remedy (8)
18 Defend increase of influence (6)
19 Run down to continue (6)
21 Letter from Greek compatriot arrives (4)
23 Mean to get warm (4)